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**HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY
MANAGEMENT COMMISSION**

Wednesday, June 9, 2010

Committee Room 1

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**HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY
MANAGEMENT COMMISSION**

Hon. Charlie Parker (Chairman)
Mr. Gordon Gosse
Hon. Frank Corbett
Ms. Pam Birdsall
Mr. Maurice Smith
Hon. Manning MacDonald
Mr. Andrew Younger
Hon. Murray Scott

In Attendance:

Mr. Roderick MacArthur
Chief Clerk of the Legislative Assembly

Mr. Byron Rafuse
Controller, Department of Finance

Mr. Greg Keefe
Deputy Minister to the Premier
Public Service

Mr. Clarence Guest
Director of Administration
Speaker's Office

HALIFAX, WEDNESDAY, JUNE 9, 2010

HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY MANAGEMENT COMMISSION

9:30 A.M.

CHAIRMAN
Hon. Charlie Parker

MR. CHAIRMAN: Good morning, ladies and gentlemen. We'll get our meeting underway. This is the first meeting of the new House of Assembly Management Commission. Welcome, all members, to our new committee.

My name is Charlie Parker, Speaker of the House and chairman of this Management Commission. Before we look at the agenda, I'm going to ask members perhaps to identify themselves for the record.

[The committee members introduced themselves.]

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you. You have before you the agenda as printed. There are nine different items on there. I just want to make note under No. 1 that the previous board that had responsibility here, the Legislature Internal Economy Board - the minutes were printed and passed out to the former members who were on that board.

I'm going to ask at this time if there's other business that people may want to add to the agenda under No. 9. Mr. Corbett.

HON. FRANK CORBETT: I just have one item that I'd like to bring under other business. It just concerns CAs, and I will move it as a motion at the appropriate time, but if you want me to read it now, I'll be more than happy, so you'll get the gist of it, anyway.

MR. CHAIRMAN: No, I think we can save it until the time comes, so I'll put that CA business under No. 9. Any other business to add to the agenda? If not, then we'll move on with our agenda.

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I guess I'll just ask, is the agenda acceptable to everybody? Agreed?

Okay, it's agreed.

Moving on to No. 2, the approval of the new regulations. Now, on May 7th in the House the Deputy Premier introduced the regulations that apply to the Act, and those have been available to everybody since that time. I understand that there's probably some

amendments that have been worked out that may be additional to those regulations that were tabled in the House. I think maybe the procedure here is that we perhaps should look at accepting what was tabled in the House and then looking at the amendments. The Clerk.

MR. RODERICK MACARTHUR: Mr. Chairman, the regulations as tabled contain a couple of cross-reference errors, and there was a typographical, and those were corrected. They are corrected in the editions you have here now - just for the record.

MR. CHAIRMAN: So I'm suggesting the procedure is that we accept what was tabled in the House, with those couple of little corrections, then look at the amendments, and then to accept everything as amended.

Is that acceptable? Agreed?

Okay, I'm open for a motion to accept the regulations that were tabled on May 7th - moved by Mr. Younger, seconded by Mr. Smith.

Would all those in favour of the motion, accepting the regulations as tabled in the House, with minor amendments, minor changes, please say Aye. Contrary minded, Nay.

The motion is carried.

There are some amendments that the Clerk is going to pass out, additions or deletions, to amend the regulations that were carried. We'll pass those around. If everyone wants to take a minute to look at those, then we'll open it up for discussion.

Okay, we'll open the floor for discussion on these amendments. Mr. Corbett.

MR. CORBETT: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. We've had a chance to share this with some members of the committee, I don't know if it was all. I would portray these amendments as being housekeeping, and so on. If they're deemed to be in order, I guess there are two ways we can proceed with this: item by item, or I will read the amendments into the record and we can vote on them en bloc. I'm just putting that out there.

HON. MURRAY SCOTT: I personally have a problem with voting en bloc as the Government House Leader suggested. I just have one question, is there anything in these amendments that changed anything with regard to the amounts paid, either per diems or monies paid to members, whether they're travelling inside or outside the province?

MR. CHAIRMAN: I don't see it. Mr. Corbett.

MR. CORBETT: It's my understanding, no, it's not the intent, Mr. Scott.

HON. MANNING MACDONALD: We discussed the amendments before and I certainly don't have any difficulty with any of the amendments proposed by the Deputy Premier. There is one clarification, I don't know if this is the place to raise it, but there's a section there about constituency assistants' salaries. We had discussed the fact that salaries would remain as they were on March 1st, until the Public Service Commission comes in with a new salary scale. Is that basically what we discussed?

[9:45 a.m.]

MR. CORBETT: It's my understanding that whatever the constituency assistants are being paid now, would stay in place until such time as the department that has been empowered to make those changes, or to give recommendations is a better way to say it, they will remain the same and they will not be changed until the recommendations are received and passed and received by this board.

MR. MANNING MACDONALD: Okay, that's fine.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Any other questions or clarifications? Mr. Gosse.

MR. GORDON GOSSE: There's one in the amendments there, "Office operations, supplies and communications," that has Section 21(10). I think that should read Section 23.

MR. CHAIRMAN: That applies to "Her Majesty the Queen in right," is it?

MR. GOSSE: No.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Oh, the one above that, "including subscriptions to online publications."

MR. GOSSE: No, "Office operations, supplies and communications," has Section 21(10), "insert 'the' between 'by' and 'outgoing.'" That should be Section 23, there is no Section 21.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Is it agreed that it should be Section 23? It's right in the middle of the page there.

Okay, any other comments or questions on these amendments? If not, we're open to a motion to accept them as amended.

MR. CORBETT: I so move.

MR. CHAIRMAN: So moved, with that one minor change there that it should be Section 23. Seconded?

Would all those in favour of the motion, accepting these amendments, please say Aye. Contrary minded, Nay.

The motion is carried.

So we've approved the original regulations, we've now approved the amendments to them. I'm open to a motion to accept the regulations as amended here today. What's your pleasure?

MR. CORBETT: So moved.

MR. CHAIRMAN: It has been moved and seconded that we accept the regulations as amended.

Are you ready for the question? Would all those in favour of the motion please say Aye. Contrary minded, Nay.

The motion is carried.

Moving on in our agenda then to No. 3, "Discussion of the administrative structure for the Legislature," It had been duly passed as a motion at the previous LIEB meeting that we ask Byron Rafuse to look at this issue in the Public Service Commission and in government. I'm going to ask Mr. Rafuse to present his findings, and Mr. Keefe as well.

MR. MACARTHUR: I might point out that the paper has been included in your documentation here this morning.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Everyone should have a copy of the recommendations from these gentlemen. So we have Byron Rafuse, the controller, and Deputy Minister Greg Keefe. Gentlemen, we'll turn it over to you to report on your findings here on this paper.

MR. GREG KEEFE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman, for the opportunity to present this morning and I just want to have a few remarks before I turn it over to Byron to go through the recommendations. Just as background, on April 22nd the Speaker wrote to me to inform me of two motions the Legislature Internal Economy Board passed. One asked that the Deputy Minister to the Premier for the civil service be asked to have the appropriate business units of government provide advice on implementing systems through, or on behalf of, the Legislature to manage MLA expenses including inventory, procurement, payroll, leasing documentation, processing and reporting of expenses. As a result of that, I asked the controller, Byron Rafuse, and his staff to prepare recommendations and it is those recommendations that we are presenting here today.

Just before I turn it over to Byron, I want to note that the concept of one government organization providing services to another is certainly not new. By way of an example, as

everyone is aware, the Canada Revenue Agency, for example, administers our income tax on behalf of the province. The province collects deed transfer tax on behalf of the municipalities. I could go on, the list is extensive, but all these things are managed by contracts. The government stays the same, it's the service that changes.

There's also another emerging trend, a move towards more shared services. That's the consolidation of backup office type functions to take advantage of both economies of scale and the building centres of excellence. The proposals we're making today are in tune with what's going on in the rest of our civil service and civil services everywhere across the country in terms of back-office consolidation. So just with those brief opening remarks, I'll turn it over to Byron to go through the recommendations.

MR. BYRON RAFUSE: Thank you, Greg, and thank you, Mr. Chairman, for the opportunity to speak to the House of Assembly Management Commission regarding the organization and procedural structure, or the administrative structure, of services of the Speaker's Office. I believe copies of the report have already been distributed to the commission members, but I have additional copies if anybody needs one.

As the Deputy Minister to the Premier's Office said, the Controller's Office was requested to review the Speaker's Office administration services to ensure that they were in keeping with services provided elsewhere in government and to provide recommendations for improvement. In addition to reviewing the current operations of the Office of the Speaker, we did review the practices of other jurisdictions, while at the same time acknowledging leading internal control practices.

The recommendations are meant to complement recent legislative changes regarding member expenses and the operations of the House. The recommendations are based on the following broad principles. The delivery model of administration services should not infringe on the independence of the House. Compliance is best obtained by rules-based policies that are consistent with modern, bureaucratic best practices and delivery models of administration services should avoid segregation and duties risk and, as well, provide appropriate backup coverage when required.

These recommendations can be summarized as follows. I can go into additional details, but I'm making the assumption that people have read the report. If you have some questions at the end, I'm certainly free to take those. The recommendations can be grouped into three areas. First of all, organization structure changes. The recommendations include the recommendation that the director of administration presently in the Office of the Speaker and the members claims clerk remain at the Speaker's Office and report to the Chief Clerk. These positions will allow the Chief Clerk to fulfill their legislative and administrative responsibilities as provided or changed in the Spring session.

The director of administration will also act as the coordinator or the coordination function between the remaining programs under the responsibility of the Speaker's Office

and the corporate service providers that will provide services under the recommendations to those programs. Those corporate service providers would be the organizations that would provide primary back-office functions. By “back-office functions,” I’m referring to the transactional side of budgeting, forecasting, procurement, accounts payable, human resources, and payroll transactions. The recommendations are that these functions and the staff performing these functions should be transferred to the appropriate corporate service unit already established within government.

Specifically, the HR functions should be transferred to the Public Service Commission; payroll transaction services should be transferred to the Payroll Transaction Unit within the Department of Finance; and the budgeting, forecasting, procurement, and accounts payable transactions should be transferred to the Finance CSU at the Department of Finance.

The second recommendation deals with additional policies and procedures that need to be developed for the Speaker’s Office. The recommendation states that the House of Assembly - this commission needs to be supported by additional policies and procedures. Those include such things, but are not limited to, training procedures or programs for members on expenses, as well as additional clarity and policies around members’ expenses versus election expenses. The underlying premise behind this, as stated in the legislation, is that in the absence of a commission policy or Speaker’s Office policy, government’s corporate policies will prevail and will be the driving force on the procedures that will be followed.

Finally, there’s a recommendation around members’ pay. The members’ pay should be moved to the government standard of all payroll being done every two weeks on a deferred basis as opposed to the current methodology, which allows bi-weekly and quarterly payments, as well, in advance.

That’s a summary of the recommendations. I thank you and I’d be pleased to answer any questions you may have at this time.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you. Questions from the floor? Mr. Scott.

MR. SCOTT: Thank you for your presentation. I want to make a comment first, and then I have a question.

You said you had looked at other jurisdictions across the country and did a comparison. I’m assuming, as well, that you looked at Newfoundland and Labrador. I guess my question is, why couldn’t you do this exact same thing that you’re suggesting here today and keep the Speaker’s Office intact?

MR. RAFUSE: Twofold - yes, we did look at the model deployed in Newfoundland and Labrador. That was certainly an option. The reason we chose not to recommend keeping the Speaker’s Office the way it is is because with smaller offices like this, there is an

inherent segregation of duties risk and also coverage risks that are hard to accommodate in a small office like that without adding additional resources, and that's the Newfoundland and Labrador model. They built up additional resources in their process, they built up redundancies for coverage and the like there.

That could have been a recommendation, but in keeping with what we've done with the rest of government, where we had these smaller financial shops elsewhere in government, these have been consolidated in government for a number of years now, where you have CSUs that either provide services to some of the larger departments on a stand-alone basis because they have the capacity or the numbers to warrant it, or we have CSUs now that serve a number of departments or serve a number of Public Service votes, and they have the ability to have capacity within their organizations to address the segregation of duties issues, and also have that detachment that any corporate service unit should have from programs, and that's why the recommendation is such as that.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Go ahead.

MR. SCOTT: Mr. Chairman, again, just a comment. I appreciate your answer. I think the perception is going to be with the public that by breaking up the Speaker's Office, the administration that has well served members in this House for many years, the perception will be that you've dealt with the issues that have become public over the last number of months by doing this. Therefore the perception is that the problem is over at the Speaker's Office, which I do not believe is the case.

I would hope that you would ensure that - obviously, this is going to move forward, the government has a majority and that's what's going to be recommended here, and I understand that, but however, I would hope that you would ensure that is not the case. The issues that we've dealt with over the last number of months publicly are as a result of rules and regulations that were actually put in place by elected members like myself, not the staff of the Speaker's Office. They simply followed the rules and regulations that we offered to them.

I don't want the public perception out there to be that the problems were with the staff over there and that as a result of that you're breaking that office up, because that is not the case. I truly believe that to be fact, and I would hope that you would state that publicly so that people would understand that.

MR. RAFUSE: Certainly. That's not the intention here at all. The intention here is that the recommendation is that this would be, if we were setting this up from day one, what would we do? We would normally put these kinds of operations into these corporate service units. I don't think anything that we've seen over the last little while would indicate that any of this relates, or any of the issues that appear at hand have anything to do with the staff of the Speaker's Office.

I understand that they - and I know some of them - have great capabilities. They'll fit well into these organizations that I'm suggesting they be transferred to. In fact, they'll have professional development opportunities within these organizations and these communities that may not have been made available to them when they were working in a stand-alone operation within the Speaker's Office. So there is opportunity for them here as well.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Mr. Younger.

MR. ANDREW YOUNGER: Mr. Chairman, with respect to Recommendation 4, how many members currently - do you have any idea how many would not be compliant with that current pay recommendation?

MR. RAFUSE: I don't have the numbers. The issue is not whether or not they are compliant. The issue is, in fact, that when members have the ability to receive certain levels of their compensation on a non-biweekly basis, like in quarterly, our systems don't allow that to go through our payroll system. We must manually calculate the remittances and then put that through our accounts payable system, and that's not a good practice.

MR. YOUNGER: Mr. Chairman, that makes sense. Sorry, Page 8 - I should have mentioned that - Recommendation 4. The reason I ask is because you're talking about a shift - and it makes sense, what you're saying. I think there's a lot of merit in that, and I'm sure that most people are on the two-week pay scale, but the question I have is, you're suggesting a shift to a two-week deferred basis. My understanding is that current one, from what you said, is not on a deferred basis, and so that would mean a shift for all MLAs - if that is the case, that everybody is not on a deferred basis. Is that correct?

[10:00 a.m.]

MR. RAFUSE: Yes. Right now everybody is on an advanced basis, so that would be a shift. There are several ways in which you can handle that so that it doesn't create, I would say, a cash-flow hardship for the members, and we certainly went through this process for the rest of government when we shifted from an advanced system to a deferred system. I believe that was in the 1990s. We can accommodate that through time by doing an advance, or you can have the implementation date into the future tied to a general election or something of that nature, yes.

MR. YOUNGER: The only reason I ask is that I think what you're suggesting does make sense and I don't want to mitigate that, but I think we should all understand what the recommendation means, which means everybody is not going to get paid in one pay scale.

MR. RAFUSE: That's one possible way of addressing this, yes.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Mr. MacArthur.

MR. MACARTHUR: Can I offer clarification? There are three members and one Chief Clerk who are on the quarterly system, and it's historic. I see nothing wrong with the recommendation, so long as there's some advance notice. I'm suggesting perhaps to the end of the year, this calendar year. You might also note that in your existing regulations, which you just approved, that the quarterly system is retained there, so it would require a change in your regulations if you do it.

[10:00 a.m.]

MR. RAFUSE: If I could address it. For clarity - we're not just talking base pay, we're also talking committee fee pay. People can continue to be paid on a quarterly basis and we could tie that into their regular biweekly pays, as opposed to doing a separate payment run on those quarters. If the Commission allows, we could stagger that throughout the quarter as opposed to - without having a kind of wholesale regulatory change, so there could be some accommodations made there.

MR. YOUNGER: Mr. Chairman, not to belabour it, I understand what the Clerk is saying, but I think it actually affects all 52 members, because the shift from advanced to deferred is what will be the impact for most people.

MR. MACARTHUR: Absolutely, but the controller is suggesting that there is perhaps a way to mitigate that, so . . .

MR. CHAIRMAN: Any other comments or questions?

MR. MACARTHUR: I have some questions. Reading the report you indicated that the administration of Legislatures, I presume throughout the world, using the Westminster model happened by default. Where did you get that information?

MR. RAFUSE: Sorry, happened by default?

MR. MACARTHUR: "By default" - it's in your report - as opposed to design.

MR. RAFUSE: Oh, sorry, yes. By default - meaning, as with all governments and bureaucracies, as they set up things people set up their own capacity to deal with their own administration systems. The House of Assembly, being an independent entity, on any of these models set up capacity within their own organizations. By design - you wouldn't, if you sat back and thought about it, you probably wouldn't design an administrative system that way in keeping with modern kinds of best practices about separations of duties and the ability to have appropriate backup coverages. Across the country, these offices tend to be relatively small - we have five individuals, plus a director here - and the capacity for coverage in those things is limited. That's what was meant by that.

MR. MACARTHUR: That's what you mean by default?

MR. RAFUSE: Yes, by default.

MR. MACARTHUR: Because I think history would bear out that this was all done by design over the last 500 or 600 years, where the Legislatures exerted their authority and power versus the Crown or the executive. Are there any other jurisdictions - well, we'll just simply say in Canada - that will have a system based on what you recommend here?

MR. RAFUSE: No, I would suggest to you that most organizations, or most jurisdictions across the country are probably similarly organized the way the current Speaker's Office is, and this is not the model that Newfoundland and Labrador has. Newfoundland and Labrador had basically built up its own CSU, corporate service unit, around the Speaker's Office.

MR. MACARTHUR: And you indicate that there's one Canadian province that is not independent, the Legislature doesn't have an independent system or structure in place, and I believe you indicated to me in an earlier meeting that that is Newfoundland and Labrador, yet they have 17 people in addition to the Clerk there - you know, it sounds to me like it's an independent office.

MR. RAFUSE: No, it's embedded within the Speaker's Office. By "independent" I meant back-office services not being provided by the rest of the Newfoundland and Labrador Government, which they have services similar to us where they have corporate services units throughout their government that provide back-office services. They built the capacity in Newfoundland and Labrador within the Speaker's Office, so that would not be what I would characterize as an independent . . .

MR. MACARTHUR: So are you suggesting then that back-office services means every function of the office except for initial approval of member's claims - is everything else a back-office service?

MR. RAFUSE: Back-office service to me is the transactional side of those functions I mentioned which were accounts payable, procurement, back-office functions around HR, the back-office function at the transaction side of payroll and the transaction side of the budgeting forecast process.

MR. MACARTHUR: Well, you're suggesting that only the director remains with one other individual to do claims - surely you must mean that everything else is a back-office service then?

MR. RAFUSE: That's presently now on the transactional side, yes.

MR. MACARTHUR: Did you take into account or get any opinion as to how this might interfere or affect the privileges of the Legislature?

MR. RAFUSE: We were conscious of that. In my view, the provision of back-office services does not infringe on that.

MR. MACARTHUR: But again, back-office services means everything but what is to be left, very little.

MR. RAFUSE: Yes.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Any other comments or questions for our presenters? What is your pleasure then on this report? What do you wish to do with it?

MS. PAM BIRDSALL: I move that we adopt it.

MR. CHAIRMAN: There has been a motion to adopt the report as presented by Mr. Rafuse and Mr. Keefe. Is there a seconder for that?

Moved and seconded. Are you ready for the question?

MR. MACARTHUR: This is a debatable motion, I presume.

MR. CHAIRMAN: It is.

MR. MACARTHUR: Could I say a few words on it?

MR. CHAIRMAN: Sure, okay, the question is on the floor.

MR. MACARTHUR: As a member of this commission and as a long-standing servant of the House - I've written this and please excuse me, I'm going to read from this - I feel I have no choice but to make comment on the recommendations contained in the administrative review. It is absolutely beyond question that the House of Assembly has, by virtue of its inherent and recognized privileges, the right to control its internal affairs, not just the right to do so, but the right to do so without interference. The existing administration office falls into that privileged category. It has provided individualized and yeoman service to members since all can remember.

The House has charged the Management Commission, which is you folks, by Statute, with many responsibilities, including in Section 11, “. . . the financial stewardship of all public money . . .” voted by the House for the Assembly and also the direction “to monitor the expenditures of the Assembly;” and to “review and approve the administrative, financial, human-resource and management policies and procedures of the Assembly offices;”. It is, indeed, a broad mandate, but I would argue that there is no express

authorization from the House to give up or reduce its privileges. Accepting most of the recommendations being made here is doing just that, in my opinion.

Again, I am not speaking in support of any individual political Party or philosophical bent, I am just laying out what I believe is clearly recognized by the authorities, the learned texts, the courts and the other legislative bodies throughout the world, based on the Westminster model.

What will, in actuality, the results of the adoption of this report be? In brief, (a) a gutted office with a director and one staff person; (b) all human resources transferred to either the Public Service Commission and a government-controlled corporate services unit; (c) all budgetary functions being transferred to the government-controlled corporate services unit at the Department of Finance, I assume; and (d) all accounts payable and payroll transferred out in a like manner.

Where is there a semblance of the independence of Parliament? It is all about the executive controlling the legislative function. I would caution the commission to look very hard at what is being proposed. I, too, am very distressed over the events of the last few months. I am supportive of the changes that have taken place by resolution or in the regulations to limit what could be considered to be inappropriate or excessive expenditures. These improvements have come about based on regulation changes or on the passage of resolutions by the old LIEB, the previous management entity. It resulted in a tightening of the rules of the game, in effect.

The thrust of the Auditor General's reporting and recommendations was along these lines. The focus certainly was never on the activities or actions of the administration office or staff. The office was able to work only with the regulations and rules as were in place. Yes, office-related compliance control and best administrative practices can be improved, I agree with that. There is always room for improvement, with enhanced staffing levels, segregation of tasks and so on, but again I reiterate, this was never the focus of the Auditor General's words of wisdom and should not be made such by this commission. Don't divert from the real problems, and take the time to consider what you are doing. Don't try to make an issue out of something where there isn't a real issue, and at the same time forever damage the independence of the House. This is an institution that not only serves all members equally but can be said to be that which offers protection to all, especially the minority, and all members know that sooner or later that is one's lot in political life. I won't go on any further, but I just had to speak up for the institution, and I'm sorry if I offended anyone in any way.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you, Rod, we appreciate your input. The floor is still open on the question. Mr. Scott.

MR. SCOTT: Mr. Speaker, I guess a couple of things, I really thought that there would be some recommendations that would come back to this group with some options and I didn't expect that there would be recommendations that would actually dismantle the

Speaker's Office. I'm really surprised here today to debate that when it is going to make the appearance again, publicly, that the issue is the Speaker's Office as opposed to what the real issues were, and I think the real issues have been addressed.

The rules and regulations have been changed. There are accountability processes put in place. I think the Auditor General would support the changes that have been made. To the best of my knowledge, I don't think he ever suggested there was ever any issue with the Speaker's Office. This will be the only place in Canada that we're dismantling the Speaker's Office and transferring the responsibilities into government departments, when what we should be doing is enhancing the Speaker's Office and providing the resources so that they can ensure the rules and regulations have been adopted and, as suggested by the Auditor General, actually put in place.

Again, I know the government has majority, Mr. Chairman, but I feel strongly about this. I think that the public perception is going to be that the problem's in the Speaker's Office and it absolutely has not been. They are very dedicated professional people over there and I don't think it's fair that they're going to be wearing the responsibility for what has taken place. I heard what the Clerk said, and I agree with him totally, and I for one will be voting against it

MR. MANNING MACDONALD: The only comment I would make presently on this is that we're seeing this for the first time today and our caucus has not had an opportunity to discuss it. That's my concern with it, that the feelings of our caucus are not at the table here today. I can't speak for the other two, the PC caucus or the Government caucus, but our caucus hasn't seen these and that's my concern right now.

MR. CORBETT: Mr. Chairman, I hear what Mr. Scott has to say, and the Clerk. Let me say at the outset that this is to be no reflection on the people who work in the Speaker's Office. The mere fact that if this was to be from that perspective, that it would be issues taken up with these employees, but these employees will be employed elsewhere within the civil service. More important, to go to the Clerk's position, as someone who has served in this House and respects the privilege of the House, I don't for one moment believe that moving these services, in a more efficient manner, hurts the stand-alone capacity of the Legislature and that's why our caucus will be supporting these recommendations.

MR. CHAIRMAN: There is a motion on the floor. Are you ready for the question? Would all those in favour of the motion please say Aye. Contrary minded, Nay.

The motion is carried.

Before we move on, I do want to take a moment, as has been mentioned here already, we do have a very dedicated staff in the Speaker's Office, many of which are here with us this morning. They've been working there for years, hard-working, and doing the job that has been assigned to them. I think they can hold their heads high in knowing that

they've done a good job, and they'll still be employed, in a different capacity, but I just want to take a minute to say thank you to our hard-working staff for all the work that they've done and certainly to wish them every success in the future, wherever that may lead them. So, thank you to each and every one of you.

Item No. 4 on our agenda is dealing with any possible funding increases now that there has been a change in our administrative structure. The Office of the Speaker certainly will contain an administrative person and a second person to help with MLA expenses et cetera. I'm going to turn this over to Clarence Guest at this moment to outline what he sees or what might be the needs of the office as we move forward here. Is there anything, Clarence, that you could add to us there.

MR. GUEST: Not really at this point in time. Not knowing if the recommendations would have been accepted or not, I really haven't turned my thoughts to exactly what will be required in the future. I should leave it at that.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Okay, our Clerk, are there any thoughts on that?

MR. MACARTHUR: I think that there perhaps is a need of another clerk there to assist the person doing the claims. There is no backup, no redundancy - illness, vacations, that kind of stuff. If you don't want to deal with it now, you should deal with it at a meeting soon.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Perhaps at our next meeting we'll have a better handle on where we're at, where we're going with the present staff and we'll identify the needs that are in the office there. One of the additional needs is the need to post on-line and there may well be other additional responsibilities. Mr. Scott?

MR. SCOTT: So if I understand right . . .

MR. MACARTHUR: Sorry, Clarence misunderstood your question, Mr. Chairman.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Okay. Well, then I'll come back to Mr. Scott if you don't mind.

MR. GUEST: I did think a bit about - sorry, I did misunderstand, perhaps I wasn't listening as well as I should have. I did look at it and in my view, based on the recommendation that was passed, Mr. MacArthur is right - I would see us requiring an additional clerk. This would allow for better processing, more efficient processing of the MLA expenses. It would also provide some backup. I believe, as well, it would give us the capacity to put the MLA expense claims, et cetera, on-line. The approximate cost to add a clerk would be in the area of \$55,000.

In addition to that, we would require a computer programmer which would be connected to the Legislative Library to develop a program and maintain the Web site to

allow these expenses to go on-line. We currently use a programmer part time so it wouldn't be the full expense involved but again, roughly \$45,000 to \$47,000. I believe the additional resources that we require based on the recommendation put forward this morning, in the area of \$100,000 to \$105,000 in additional expenses for the Office of the Speaker.

MR. CHAIRMAN: So, that's one additional person plus the equipment required to do the extra responsibilities, is it? Okay. Mr. Scott, did you still have a comment or a question?

MR. SCOTT: I do, yes. So if I understand right, what the recommendation is that we would continue to have a director of administration at a salary of how much?

MR. MACARTHUR: Apparently, the Public Service Commission is doing a review of the classification.

MR. SCOTT: How much is it today?

MR. GUEST: The salary would top out at approximately \$99,000 plus fringe benefits.

MR. SCOTT: For \$99,000, we'll have a director of administration to administer one person? Right? MLA claims person?

MR. GUEST: Including fringe benefits, \$55,271.00.

MR. SCOTT: That's for the claims? So we'll pay \$100,000 a year for a director to direct one person.

MR. CHAIRMAN: No, the director of administration will still have responsibility, liaison, with all the CSUs that are there - the directors in those departments, whether it's payroll or human resources or accounts payable, whatever, but there is a number of other responsibilities that person would have.

MR. SCOTT: But, Mr. Chairman, those responsibilities are being transferred to the departments in the government.

MR. CHAIRMAN: But they're still responsibilities of that director of administration to oversee some of the - it's a liaison position with those departments, I believe.

MR. MACARTHUR: The person will be a traffic cop, liaising between the government CSUs and their directors and so on and the various suboffices that are administered such as the Lieutenant Governor's Office, the Ombudsman, Elections Nova Scotia. This will all have impact on those offices too, these changes here. We don't know how it's all going to work out yet, but Clarence could add to that.

MR. GUEST: Not to correct the Clerk but to correct him, it is my understanding that the Office of the Ombudsman, Elections Nova Scotia, would no longer funnel anything through the Office of the Speaker. That would be dealt directly with the Public Service Commission and the Department of Finance. What would be left for the director to administer would be probably some 12 to 15 budgets within the Legislative services.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Hansard and Legislative Counsel and still a number of responsibilities.

MR. GUEST: I had a list of them here if you want me to read them out, but it's about 12 or 15 that would be left.

MR. SCOTT: I appreciate that. My point here is that we had an individual, a director of administration, who was working full time to provide those services that are now eliminated from the Speaker's Office, thanks to the Dexter Government. I think there has been very little thought, if any, given to, and it was just mentioned already, that we're going to feel our way along here and see where this takes us.

Well, you're dismantling something that has been in place here for a century and without any thought as to where we're going here. Again, we're still going to have a director of administration, \$100,000 a year, and I'm not convinced that that position is going to be needed. If this is about - if you look at the whole structure of the Speaker's Office in the past, I don't think it's going to be possible for two people to continue to do the work that the administrator has done, without support, with only one person.

MR. CHAIRMAN: That's what Mr. Guest is suggesting here, that we need an additional person to help handle that workload.

There still will be a large number of responsibilities, I think, for the director of administration. Mr. Guest referred to 12 or 15 different departments. Perhaps you could read those out, Clarence, just so that it would give some idea of the responsibility that is still there, I believe.

MR. GUEST: I would just add that, to the best of my knowledge, and certainly I didn't undertake any review to find out exactly what work would remain or how many staff would be required to do it, there has been, to the best of my knowledge, no real comprehensive review done to see what we require. There would be the indemnity/expense allowance - I'm just referring now to budget subjects, if you would - the members' travel expenses, CPA, legislative expenses, legislative printing (Hansard), legislative printing as it relates to bills and then another section called "Other", the Conflict of Interest Commissioner. I'll defer to the Clerk here - AIPLF?

MR. MACARTHUR: AIPLF, that's the old way of saying the French parliamentary organization.

MR. GUEST: My apologies for not knowing - the caucus gift bank, Internal Affairs, Law Amendments Committee, Private and Local Bills, Internal Economy Board and now the House of Assembly, the Commission on Inquiries, constituency expenses, ministers' salaries and expenses, and then, of course, what is left of the administration of the Office of the Speaker.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you. In addition I think one of the responsibilities that will soon be on the plate of the administrator, as well as the Clerk, in the regulations and the Act it refers to a training manual that has to be prepared to train new members and present members on the regulations and how the constituency offices can be conducted; just everything that we do, it has to be put into a manual that has to be prepared by the director, in conjunction with the Clerk. So there certainly is some responsibility there.

There are a number of other responsibilities, too, without getting into detail, but I think that person will still be very busy.

So we had a recommendation here from - and I think it was passed around, was it? He is going to pass it around, the extra cost to maintain the Speaker's Office as it will be maintained.

I think you have before you now a list here that is prepared by - administrative officer, that extra cost to maintain the office and it is approximately \$102,800. It includes an additional clerk to help with MLA claims and a computer programmer. Any comments, any questions on this? Mr. Scott.

MR. SCOTT: Mr. Chairman, I would like to know what the difference is between the cost of administration of the Speaker's Office today compared to what these additional costs will lead to in the total budget if this is agreed to?

MR. CHAIRMAN: Does anybody have those figures?

MR. GUEST: The existing budget for the Office of the Speaker, on just strictly administrative costs for the current fiscal year, is \$696,000. I'm just going to do a real quick calculation here. With the additional resources - and again I did a very quick number - I would suggest probably in the area of \$350,000, which would obviously be the director's position, two clerks and the programmer, which wouldn't actually be assigned in this Office of the Speaker, but it would be an additional expense to handle the on-line.

MR. SCOTT: And I'm wondering as well, if there was a cost analysis done in regards to transferring these services to the departments - a cost analysis as to additional budget required for those departments to carry out the work the Speaker's Office presently is doing?

MR. GUEST: I wasn't involved so I just don't know.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Not that I'm aware of. Mr. Corbett.

MR. CORBETT: There's no cost to transfer.

MR. SCOTT: No cost?

MR. CORBETT: There will be no additional . . .

MR. SCOTT: People are going to do it for free?

MR. Corbett: No, it's going to be added to duties as they exist.

MR. SCOTT: We know how that works within government.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The salary costs will be transferred out, so there should be a balance then.

MR. CORBETT: If I may, if what I'm maybe hearing here is worrying about what the cost will be, then if we want to defer any action around Item No. 4 to find out what the costing is, I would be amenable to that.

MR. SCOTT: Mr. Chairman, my point here is this, we're going to transfer how many - Mr. Guest, how many people are being transferred out to other departments? Four?

MR. GUEST: Four.

MR. SCOTT: So their salaries are going to continue in those departments, so that cost is going to stay?

MR. GUEST: Right.

MR. SCOTT: We're going to reclassify the administrator which means the salary is going up. We're going to, we'll say - and the other thing is, of course, we're going to maintain one staffer now and we're going to have additional cost of \$102,800. I'd like to know where the savings are here that I heard talked about here earlier making everything more efficient and making it run more - I would just like to know where the savings are. I see \$102,000 additional being spent here over and above what we're spending today and we know in government, that will become more than that. I would like to know where the savings are?

MR. CHAIRMAN: Mr. Corbett.

MR. CORBETT: Well, Mr. Speaker, if Mr. Scott wants to put that as a motion not to have these hired, I'll second it.

[10:30 a.m.]

MR. SCOTT: Mr. Chairman, I just want to see a cost analysis of the decision we're being asked to take here today. I don't see it in front of us.

MR. CHAIRMAN: We have no motion on the floor at the moment, we have a discussion. Mr. Smith.

MR. MAURICE SMITH: I would move that we defer Item No. 4 on the agenda to allow a cost analysis for costing of the new positions and equipment - whatever we need - to comply with the structure that we're going to be putting in place and to benefit Mr. Scott's question to ask for an analysis of the transfer.

MR. CHAIRMAN: There's a motion on the floor to defer this recommendation. Is there a seconder for that. There's a seconder. We have a motion to defer extra costs, seconded by Mr. Scott.

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

The motion is carried.

So it will be on our agenda for a future meeting. In the meantime, I guess our director of administration and our Clerk will be working on getting those answers.

Moving on our agenda to No. 5, Approval of existing policies of the Legislature Internal Economy Board and the Administrative Office procedures that are not inconsistent with the express Regulations of the new Management Commission, and an example is given there about the advertising guidelines in the caucuses. I'm going to ask our Clerk to speak to this one.

MR. MACARTHUR: Well, there's a bit of a gap here and I just want to make sure that since the new regulations that we have do not deal with caucus expenditures and this body, in general terms, has responsibility for the funding per se. There was, a couple of years ago, put in place a policy piece talking about what caucuses could use their funds for with respect to advertising. I think it's important that we preserve that document. That's basically the gist of this agenda item. There also may be some internal procedures in the administrative office that have been approved in the past that are not inconsistent with the express changes here. The internal procedures were always put in place for protection, obviously - protection for monies, protection for members and that kind of thing. It's not

asking for the world, in my opinion, and it will resolve any potential question as to whether or not these things apply.

MR. SMITH: Mr. Chairman, could I ask the Clerk, I'm new, historically, at this. Is there actually - you talk about existing policies of the LIEB, the Legislative Internal Economy Board, are they written anywhere? Is there any kind of . . .

MR. MACARTHUR: Yes.

MR. SMITH: Okay, so could we have a look at those before we . . .

MR. MACARTHUR: Yes, there's just one express piece and it deals with caucuses.

MR. SMITH: And that's the advertising issue?

MR. MACARTHUR: Yes.

MR. SMITH: So there's nothing other than that? There are no other policies?

MR. MACARTHUR: No other written policies that will have any effect here. There was an advertising policy with respect to members. That is now gone because of new express rules or regulations, whatever you want to call them. That's the only piece that is being preserved here, possible internal procedures in use in the office that are there for safety's sake . . .

MR. SMITH: Are they recorded anywhere? Is there any way of us having a look at what those are? If we're going to approve them, I'd like to see what they are.

MR. MACARTHUR: I don't have them, but I'm just trying to think of what there might possibly be out there that's worth preserving, but we could leave that out. We could just approve, restrict it to the existing caucus matter.

MR. SMITH: It's also mentioned here, administrative office procedures.

MR. MACARTHUR: That's what I'm saying, you could perhaps leave that out because I don't know of anything that was written in a form that was approved by the LIEB. There were perhaps practical procedures in the office developed by the director at the time with respect to some things. For example, there was an unwritten policy of what to do with respect to constituency expenses during election periods.

One of the recommendations of this review group was to develop a regulation, that we must develop a regulation, which clearly defines what money can be spent on during the election period. I'm very supportive of that. There has been an unwritten rule in the past that we will approve nothing by way of advertising, it's just straight CA expense, the hard

costs, such as rent and that kind of thing. We won't approve even contact information for MLAs during an election period. That would be an example of an internal policy that has been in place, but it's not written down anywhere, that one isn't.

MR. SMITH: And that one is going to be looked after by the new . . .

MR. MACARTHUR: Well, we have to develop a new regulation; I think everybody is supportive of that. You just approved the report, so you've approved that. Also, you have to make changes in your regulations with respect to the pay matter and perhaps build in some sort of slide-in on that.

MR. SMITH: Just so I'm clear, the only policy that you want to preserve is the one that is in writing, the LIEB one dealing with the advertising of caucus?

MR. MACARTHUR: Well, yes, I guess we have the good luck in the by-elections that are about to come up, that we don't have any existing member - they are out - so we don't really have to worry about that situation. Yes, I'd be happy just with the preservation of the caucus advertising guidelines.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you. Primarily what you are suggesting is that we maintain the status quo in caucus advertising guidelines.

MR. MANNING MACDONALD: Just for certainty, I guess - it is my understanding that the same thing will apply here, that the 10 per cent rule on advertising will apply to all members and that no political advertising whatsoever will be paid for by the public purse. Is that your understanding, Rod?

MR. MACARTHUR: As I understand that, that's part of the new regulations that you've approved here today.

MR. MANNING MACDONALD: Okay.

MR. CHAIRMAN: So we have a suggestion here - what is your pleasure on it?

MR. SCOTT: I'll move that we approve the existing policies, as indicated, but leaving out the Administrative Office procedures.

MR. CHAIRMAN: So primarily then we're dealing with caucus advertising guidelines. Okay, so it has been moved, is there a seconder for that? (Interruption)

Moved by Mr. Scott, seconded by Mr. Smith, that I guess we maintain the present caucus advertising guidelines as laid out by the previous LIEB. Are you ready for the question? The question has been called.

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

The motion is carried.

Item No. 6 on our agenda is discussion / approval of directives re office furniture and equipment. You should have received, I believe, a one-pager on the draft on the commission directive No. 1 outlining a number of furniture and equipment options for constituency offices.

Mr. Younger.

MR. YOUNGER: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I think I'd like to suggest that that might want to go back to the caucuses. The reason is it is actually different than what we all agreed to a couple of months ago - there are items that are permitted if they are included in the directives and regulations that aren't on this list, and then the number of computers has changed. There are all kinds of things that have changed on here, so I would suggest that be returned to the caucuses, just to make sure we're not missing out - the regulations permit a backup drive, for example, for the sake of argument, if it's on the approved list, but it's not on the approved list.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Are you prepared to make that a motion?

MR. YOUNGER: As long as nobody objects, I'll make that. I mean it's a minor issue, but I'd hate to do it wrong.

MR. CHAIRMAN: A motion then to defer it to a future meeting, for caucus input. Is there a seconder for that?

AN HON. MEMBER: Yes.

It is moved and seconded that we defer Item No. 6 on our agenda for further consultation. Ready for the question? The question has been called.

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

The motion is carried.

So that will be on our agenda for a future meeting and hopefully then caucuses will have a chance to look at it and make some further recommendations.

Item No. 7, discussion/ approval of an inventory control system. Maybe our director of administration, I think he's been doing a little bit of work on that and I'll ask for his input.

MR. GUEST: The Department of Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal has - in fact, the caucus offices have already been contacted - offered to undertake looking after all the inventory for anything associated with the Office of the Speaker, the caucus offices, or the constituency offices. They have the existing program that would allow them to do this quite quickly and quite efficiently and then they would maintain it in the years to come.

Essentially what it is, they will itemize the furniture and equipment in the offices and then they would maintain the inventory and make sure it is updated.

MR. CHAIRMAN: You had some liaison, then, with somebody within the Department of Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal and there are some guidelines or some suggestions coming from them on how best to handle this?

MR. GUEST: Yes, Mr. Chairman.

MR. CHAIRMAN: So it's an ongoing type of thing, you don't have a final recommendation at this point?

MR. GUEST: Other than that we should accept their offer to do the inventory and maintain it on their systems, as opposed to the Office of the Speaker developing its own separate inventory system and subsequently having to hire staff to manage it.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Is there comment or discussion on Mr. Guest's comments? Mr. Smith.

MR. SMITH: I just want to speak to that. In my last career, it worked very well having that system in place, and if something becomes redundant, then there's somebody to take it away and, if it's no longer necessary, something can be stored, it's quite an effective system. It exists throughout the province and it would be - we don't need to create a new system, there's one there that works very well.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Mr. MacArthur.

MR. MACARTHUR: Of course, members will still be free, under the regulations, to acquire replacement assets with approval, but you're not going into a totally government-controlled system. I would recommend it, I really would. As to how quick it can be implemented, I don't know and, of course, it would only apply to assets acquired on or after October 28, 2009.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Mr. Smith.

MR. SMITH: I just want you to know, I had a notice already, they're coming around.

MR. CHAIRMAN: So for information purposes then, I guess our director of administration is working on it and we'll continue to let him have those discussions with TIR.

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

No. 8 on our agenda is, Action to be taken re auditing for the current fiscal year. This is a transition year and regulations and guidelines state certain things that should be done as far as auditing. I'm going to turn it over to our Clerk, for his input.

MR. MACARTHUR: Again, as the Speaker has indicated, this is a transition year, there's no way we can comply with respect to the year that has just gone by at the end of March, the year that came to an end at that time. You have to keep in mind, too, that the Auditor General did do a full financial statement audit and a forensic audit up through until the end of June of last year. It's not as if there's a huge gap here, but it's impossible to comply. We don't have an audit committee in place, that will take some time. There are things that the Clerk has to do with respect to declaring that, in his opinion, the internal controls are adequate. I guess I'll have to simply assess what the internal controls of the Department of Finance are. All that has to be done, I would suggest, before the end of fiscal year, any fiscal year.

[10:45 a.m.]

This body has to engage an auditor before the end of a fiscal year; you can't do it with respect to the year that has gone by; it's a legal impossibility to deal with the year that has just gone by. I think the plan should go in place that we do it for the year that we're in now and toward the end of this calendar year start taking some action with respect to an auditor and so on. The way the Act reads, I would suggest that during minority governments, every two years you would do a full value-for-money audit, a compliance audit, and during majority governments, I think it would be safe to do it every third year. The other years you would just do a financial-statement-type audit.

MR. CHAIRMAN: All members should have a copy of that one page here.

MR. MACARTHUR: Yes, it's in your handouts. I just wanted approval of the commission with respect to this.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Mr. Smith.

MR. SMITH: I just have a question. I'm looking at the Act and it's Section 11(3), I guess, it says, (3)(c), "ensure that an annual financial audit is completed of the accounts

of the Assembly in accordance with Section 22 before September 1st . . .” Then the next one, of the year following the fiscal year to which that audit relates.

MR. MACARTHUR: Right. The Act didn’t become law until May 11th.

MR. SMITH: Right.

MR. MACARTHUR: So it’s impossible to comply with respect to the year that has just gone by, it’s impossible. You’re supposed to have had an auditor appointed by the end of that previous fiscal year. There was supposed to be an assessment done by the Clerk before the end of that year on which the auditor then makes a determination as well. It’s multi-layered, it’s impossible to comply.

The auditor, of course, takes the time between the time he is appointed, or it is appointed, and the fiscal year has to come to an end, obviously, so the auditor is doing the audit come April 1st of any one year and has to present his or her or their report by September. I think that’s how you’re reading there.

MR. CHAIRMAN: So that information that the Clerk has presented about the audit process and at some point this commission is going to have to appoint a couple of its members to be on the audit committee as well as two additional members appointed by the Chief Justice. That’s for a future meeting. There are a number of other items we’ll have to address, but that’s certainly one of them.

You have the report there from the Clerk on his recommendations on not proceeding on an audit immediately but wait until the first fiscal year is up - March 31, 2011. Are there any comments on what’s being recommended or any questions?

Is it agreed then that the Clerk has the authority as outlined on the one page to proceed with the audit process but not until the end of the fiscal year coming up?

It is agreed.

Moving on to No. 9 on our agenda, Other business, I believe you had an item, Mr. Corbett, you wanted to talk about. It was around the CA issue, was it?

MR. CORBETT: I shared this with the two House Leaders previously. It’s a resolution that would capture some ways that we may have missed. I’ll read the resolution, then I’ll make a comment if it’s okay:

Therefore be it resolved that all part-time CAs or summer students working at constituency offices currently, including those that may be on current payroll of those offices but not having been called for work in the past month, be pre-approved by the Commission under Section 1(I).”

The purpose of this is that the legislation talks about members getting pre-approval for part-time workers. We want to make sure these other workers should be grandfathered in and that they be considered employees now rather than having to go back and ask for approval.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Are you making that a motion?

MR. CORBETT: Yes.

MR. CHAIRMAN: It's been moved, is there a seconder? Seconded by Mr. Scott. Is there discussion on this?

MR. MACARTHUR: I just want to ask one question. Under Section 1(I) of what? Sorry. I don't see it in the Act. Under the regulations or the Act?

MR. CORBETT: In the Act, I think.

MR. MACARTHUR: It's not in the Act or the regulations, so it might be a wrong reference.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Regardless of the authority where it's at, the principle of your motion is to allow present CAs or part-time staff to be grandfathered in for pay rather than having a pre-approval from this commission to be hired.

MR. CORBETT: If I could make a friendly amendment, we agree with the intent of the motion and we'll clean up the language of where it's supposed to reside.

MR. SMITH: It's Section 21(1)(I).

MR. CHAIRMAN: Of the regulations?

MR. SMITH: Page 10 of the regulations.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Mr. Younger.

MR. YOUNGER: I have no problem with the motion. Just on a clarification, obviously this is a grandfathering one. There are a lot of new members in the House who wouldn't have anybody grandfathered. I'm wondering how often the commission plans to meet because my expectation is that, come a couple of weeks from now, the committee is going to be faced with a whole lot of requests for summer staff from various new members in the House, most of which are, obviously, with the government Party. So I'm wondering whether currently it requires the Management Commission to deal with every single one of those, and I'm wondering whether we want to stick with that or whether it should go

through your office. I'm just wondering how you want to deal with those, because unless we're going to be prepared to meet fairly quickly (Interruption) and fairly often I would say.

MR. CHAIRMAN: If you give the authority to this office (Interruptions)

MR. MACARTHUR: It wouldn't be our office, it would be the Public Service Commission.

MR. YOUNGER: Well, whichever.

MR. CHAIRMAN: This commission will meet as necessary, you know, around the clock.

MR. CORBETT: I understand what Mr. Younger is saying, is that we don't want to be hamstrung here, that if every one of us around the table were hiring summer a replacement, that we would have to convene a meeting of the commission to get approval, that that be vested with the director for approval.

MR. CHAIRMAN: That sounds reasonable. This motion we have on the floor, though, has not been voted on yet. Is there further discussion on it?

MR. MANNING MACDONALD: I think the only thing we have to keep in mind here is there's no extra money involved here, it's within the constituency members' budget.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Yes, that's correct.

MR. MANNING MACDONALD: So there could be no reason for a member to go and ask for six or seven people, because you simply won't have the money to pay them. I think that's the control we have over that.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Well, our director of administration, I think, would be on this, too, and as long as members are within their allocated budget, I don't anticipate a problem.

We have a motion on the floor to deal with this item. Is there further discussion?

MR. GUEST: May I make a comment?

MR. CHAIRMAN: Mr. Guest.

MR. GUEST: Just to remind the members that they passed a motion saying that these responsibilities would now be at the Public Service Commission, so while the paper may flow through me, I would have no authority, because the authority now lies with the Public Service Commission.

MR. CORBETT: I'm just questioning whether it really - I think it's at the Public Service Commission to describe where they fit on the pay scale, but I don't believe it's the Public Service Commission's right to hire and fire at that level; I think it's our ability as individual members of the Legislature. I think when you look at it, what it contemplates with the Public Service Commission is that they will set a pay rate and then expunge themselves.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Right.

MR. GUEST: Sorry, my apologies, I meant the actual process itself would go through the Public Service Commission, that it would no longer flow through the Office of the Speaker. So we won't have, for all intents and purposes, an HR person to do that work.

MR. CORBETT: Okay, I understand now.

MR. MANNING MACDONALD: That just begs the question that we have to look at in the future, who these people are actually employed by. I think that we have to pay some attention to that in the future because there's still some uncertainty out there of who actually employs these people, whether it's the Speaker's Office and now the Public Service Commission, or the MLAs. I think at some future meeting we have to address that.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Good point. Are you ready for the question?

MR. MACARTHUR: So the approval is for the resolution that's been read (Interruptions)

MR. CHAIRMAN: For the resolution as read. The question has been called. Would all those in favour of the motion please say Aye. Contrary minded, Nay.

The motion is carried.

Is there other business to come before the commission? Mr. Scott.

MR. SCOTT: Mr. Chairman, one really quick thing just as a result of the discussions here today. You will recall at a previous meeting we had agreed on a motion I made that reoccurring monthly expenses would be - we would allow members to meet with the Speaker's Office and assume those responsibilities of monthly payments that are the same amounts each month. I'm just wondering now, in light of what this board has decided today, where we go from there, because I think it's very important that we take as much ownership away from MLAs in regard to those monthly expenses that they're required to put their own money out to pay, that we transfer those as quickly as possible. So I'm just wondering now, who would that responsibility lie with?

MR. CHAIRMAN: Well, that's a good question. We still have a director of administration, I think the motion passed by the previous LIEB Board was that the member

could sit down by appointment and discuss any recurring payments that were standard, that didn't change month to month, maybe an apartment rental or a constituency office rental, for example. I think that option is still there for the individual member if they so wish to sit with the director of administration to make those arrangements.

MR. GUEST: Mr. Chairman, with myself and one clerk - and I have met with a number of members, we've chatted about it - in place it's absolutely impossible for the office to take on those responsibilities now.

MR. YOUNGER: Mr. Chairman, I'm disappointed to hear that because that is in the approved regulations that that would be done. I wish I could remember which number it is, but it's in these regulations. I understand the challenge that Mr. Guest has. I know that there are number of members who have been waiting for these regulations to be formally approved to put in their request, mainly on the things that you've mentioned, like either apartment or constituency office rents. Unfortunately, the documentation requirement makes it difficult for some of those things, so they were going to transfer it over.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Okay and the office is still under review for our next meeting on what recommendation comes for additional staff, so that will be - those responsibilities really need to be outlined on what they are.

MR. SCOTT: Mr. Chairman, I think what we should give some thought to is, we've already decided what the structure is going to be, that the responsibility has been transferred out of the Speaker's Office, I think now that responsibility probably should lie with the Department of Finance. Maybe monthly we can submit all our bills and whatever to the Department of Finance and let them pay them on our behalf, still keeping with the motion that I made and allow someone from the Department of Finance maybe to accept those bills and pay them for us.

MR. CHAIRMAN: And the office is being - we're going to review it and talk about it at our next meeting on what additional staff is required in the Administration Office. Any further comment on that issue? Any further items that any member wants to bring up before the Commission?

This has been the first meeting of the House of Assembly Management Commission. I thank you for your participation and I'm open for a motion to adjourn.

We are adjourned.

[The commission adjourned at 10:59 a.m.]