

# **HANSARD**

**NOVA SCOTIA HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY**

## **HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY MANAGEMENT COMMISSION**

**Tuesday, October 19, 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. Christopher d'Entremont  
Mr. Neil Ferguson, Acting Chief Clerk of the House of Assembly  
(Non-Voting Member)

Counsel to the Commission:  
Mr. Gordon Hebb  
Chief Legislative Counsel

Speaker's Office Adviser  
Ms. Deborah Lusby  
Director of Administration  
Speaker's Office

**HALIFAX, TUESDAY, OCTOBER 19, 2010**

**HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY MANAGEMENT COMMISSION**

2:00 P.M.

CHAIRMAN  
Hon. Charlie Parker

MR. CHAIRMAN: Ladies and gentlemen, I guess we're all here. This is a duly constituted meeting of the House of Assembly Management Commission. My name is Charlie Parker, chairman of the commission. For the record I'll ask people to introduce themselves before we look at today's agenda. Maybe I'll start with Mr. MacDonald.

[ The committee members introduced themselves.]

Thank you. We have before us the agenda; I think this was mailed out to all the members previously. I guess the first item on there is the approval of the minutes from September 28<sup>th</sup>. You should have that in your package, I do believe.

Immediately under the agenda, I believe, are the minutes from our last meeting. What is your pleasure on the minutes?

HON. FRANK CORBETT: A motion to approve.

MR. CHAIRMAN: A motion to accept the minutes as printed. Is there a seconder? Okay, moved by Mr. Corbett, seconded by Mr. Younger, that we approve the minutes as circulated here, from our last meeting on September 28<sup>th</sup>.

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

The motion is carried.

Number two on our agenda is the report of the committee charged to review the Chief Clerk position. I just want to report then that that subcommittee has met and is recommending that we move forward with advertising the position; it will be a full-time position. Our director of administration is going to move the process forward and start to advertise it on CareerBeacon and elsewhere and the process will be underway. That is where we're at, I guess, with it and I just want to - I guess if there's any questions on that or I'm open to any other suggestions on that.

The committee is recommending that we move forward with advertising the position at this point in time. Any questions on that? If not, then I guess maybe we should have a motion to move that process along. Mr. d'Entremont.

HON. CHRISTOPHER D'ENTREMONT: I'll move that one.

MR. CHAIRMAN: It has been moved by Mr. d'Entremont. A seconder - Mr. Gosse - that we direct our director of administration to move forward with that process of finding a Chief Clerk.

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

The motion is carried.

No. 3 on our agenda is our audit committee. I'm going to ask our director of administration if she can give us a short update on where we're at with that.

MS. DEBORAH LUSBY: We have our first meeting booked for Tuesday, November 2<sup>nd</sup>, at 9:00 a.m. I think at the last meeting we announced that the chairman will be Lauchlin McKenzie; Leo Gallant is the other member from the community, with Manning MacDonald and Maurice Smith.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Okay, Tuesday, November 2<sup>nd</sup> will be the first committee meeting of the audit committee. Any questions from anyone on that? Mr. MacDonald.

HON. MANNING MACDONALD: It should be noted that the only two who don't get paid on that committee are the two members, in keeping with the spirit of things around here.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Absolutely. Okay, thank you, Mr. MacDonald. No other questions on the audit committee? Then we'll wish them every success with their first meeting on November 2<sup>nd</sup>.

No. 4 on our agenda is the MLA expenses on-line. We had a detailed report on this at our last commission meeting and I'm going to ask our director of administration again perhaps to give us an update of where we're at on that issue.

MS. LUSBY: All right. At the last meeting I advised everyone that we selected SAP as the financial system to report the members' expenses. One of the challenges of moving to SAP is that we need to move the members from a calendar year of January to December, to a fiscal year of April 1<sup>st</sup> to March 31<sup>st</sup>. This document that you have is outlining what we're recommending as a transition plan to move to the fiscal year starting April 1<sup>st</sup>. We're going to have January to March, 2011, to deal with before we get to start the new year on April 1<sup>st</sup>.

If we want to go through each one of these different allowances or indemnities just to make sure everyone understands what we're recommending. The annual indemnity and any additional indemnities, which would be the Deputy Speaker payments and other payments like those, they will continue to be paid bi-weekly and so there will be no impact to the member.

For committees, committees are currently paid after the six-month period of work, so for this coming December 31, 2010, they'll be paid for July 1<sup>st</sup> to December 31<sup>st</sup>, 2010. What normally would happen is that next year, from January to June, they would get paid on June 30<sup>th</sup> for the committee work, January to June. What we are recommending is that we would still make the December 31<sup>st</sup> payment for committee work done July to December 31, 2010, as always, but recommend to change the payment period for January 1<sup>st</sup> to March 31<sup>st</sup>, 2011, to match the expense time line and the end of the government's fiscal year, so the committee would get paid for three months work on March 31<sup>st</sup>, 2011.

The next payment period would be September 30<sup>th</sup> and that would be for April 1<sup>st</sup> to September 30<sup>th</sup>, for six months, and then after that it would continue to rotate on a six-month basis. In order for that to happen, we would have to change the regulations to match the fiscal year and get paid on September 30<sup>th</sup>, on March 31<sup>st</sup>, on an ongoing basis, as opposed to June 30<sup>th</sup> and December 31<sup>st</sup>, which is what the regulations say now.

The House Leaders, the Whips and the caucus chairs are currently paid twice annually at the beginning of the six-month period of work. So they would be paid on January 1<sup>st</sup> for work from January 1<sup>st</sup> to June 30<sup>th</sup>, and on July 1<sup>st</sup> for July 1<sup>st</sup> to December 31<sup>st</sup>. What we are recommending is that we'd still make the January 1<sup>st</sup> payment on January 1, 2011, but for three months so that we can tie up that fiscal year for the government at the end of March 31<sup>st</sup>. Then on April 1<sup>st</sup> we would pay for the next six-month period of work and on October 1<sup>st</sup> we would pay for the following six-month period, where again it would be in an ongoing basis of April 1<sup>st</sup> and October 1<sup>st</sup>, ongoing, and we would have to change the regulations to match the fiscal year dates, as opposed to January 1<sup>st</sup> and July 1<sup>st</sup>.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Mr. Smith.

MR. MAURICE SMITH: I'm just wondering, is there any reason why the committees are paid in arrears and the House Leaders, Whips and caucus chairs would be paid in advance?

MR. CHAIRMAN: Mr. Hebb, do you have any explanation for that?

MR. GORDON HEBB: Yes, because there is now a requirement that the committee has to meet in order for the chairs to be paid, so you're not going to know that in advance, unless you wait until the end of the six-month period.

MR. SMITH: Right. So why are the others being paid in advance?

MR. HEBB: They don't have to have a meeting in order to get the salary. It's assumed that the House Leaders, for example, will be doing the work of a House Leader. There are no specific meetings - that would be my explanation.

MS. LUSBY: For franking and travel. Normally, that would be issued on January 1<sup>st</sup> for the entire year, but in the new regulations effective January 1<sup>st</sup>, 2011, it's based on actual expenses and mileage claimed. So what we're recommending is that members be given the three-month allowance for January to March, with no carry forward at the end of March 31<sup>st</sup>. Then on April 1<sup>st</sup>, 2011 they start their 12-month cycle, so they start at the beginning of their maximum again. That's kind of the theme for the next few as well.

For constituency expenses, members are permitted up to \$4,198 and, again, that's the 2010 amount. It's recommended that members be given the three-month allowance for January to March with no carry forward, and then on April 1, 2011 they start their 12-month cycle.

[2:15 p.m.]

Advertising - members get 10 per cent of their \$4,198 per month or a maximum of 10 per cent of the constituency expenses. It's recommended that members be given their three-month allowance January to March, and then on April 1, 2011 start with the new 12-month amount. For the additional \$1,000, it's recommended if a member has not applied for that \$1,000 additional promotional funds prior to December 31, 2010, that this timeline would be extended to March 31, 2011. Then, after April 1, 2011 all members are eligible to apply for these additional funds on an annual basis.

Living allowances - there would be no change or impact on the living allowances, as members are permitted up to \$1,470 per month and ministers up to \$1,700 per month. There is normally no carry forward of any expenses from month to month.

Other travel - and this would be travel related to commuting, the caucus, Ottawa or committee trips. Currently there's a maximum of 52 commuting trips per year, four caucus trips, two Ottawa trips. A reasonable expectation would be, if we divide that by four, for January to March it could be one caucus trip, 13 commuting trips and one Ottawa trip would be a reasonable expectation, but we realize some flexibility may be required on these amounts of travel so we'll consider the circumstances as they arise. A clear slate on the number of annual trips permitted will come into effect on April 1, 2011.

The last point is about out of pocket. Currently, if a member exceeds their monthly allowance, we would enter that information in the MLA monitoring system and the member could carry an out-of-pocket allowance. Maybe to explain it a little better, if your maximum amount is \$4,198 for a year, constituency expenses, if you spent \$5,000, you'd be reimbursed the \$4,198 but \$800 would sit in an out-of-pocket balance account to be offset against your following month's expenses. A member would not be reimbursed for an amount greater than the monthly allowance.

Going out of pocket isn't an option with SAP. We were able to manage that with our customized system, which is the MLA monitoring system but it's not possible with SAP. So rather than our office managing that out-of-pocket balance, we're asking that the members submit for the maximum amount per month that they are allowed and no more out-of-pocket.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Mr. Corbett.

MR. CORBETT: You can't go forward, SAP won't recognize it going forward, but say, if you have a credit, if you want to call it that, an out-of-pocket credit of, say, \$500 for the month of January, then in February your total expenses are \$400 over, will it recognize that and reimburse you that money?

MS. LUSBY: We were going to start this for January 1<sup>st</sup>, no more out-of-pocket.

MR. CORBETT: I'm just making up dates, though. So, it doesn't recognize going forward but it recognizes retro? Do I make myself clear?

MS. LUSBY: I'm not sure I understand your question, but as of December 31<sup>st</sup> this year, the members will be finishing their calendar year.

MR. CORBETT: Yes, okay, I know all that. What I want to get to is, say if someone puts in for \$5,000 in January, it does not accept that, right? But if it put in for \$3,500 in January and then put in for \$4,400 in February, it will recognize that, that was a carryover?

MS. LUSBY: Yes.

MR. CORBETT: But it doesn't recognize it retro.

MS. LUSBY: Right.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Mr. Younger.

MR. ANDREW YOUNGER: One clarification first and then I think there may be a simpler solution to all this on that one. The first clarification I have is because these are non-tax-bearing amounts, I assume, SAP, that makes no difference. If somebody submits half their monthly claim that was taxable and the other half didn't attract HST, that's not going to create issues within SAP, is it?

MS. LUSBY: No, the tax is managed.

MR. YOUNGER: What I'm wondering is, this system had always been based on this \$4,198 a month because it was in the MLA monitoring system and that's how that worked and that made it easy enough. We're switching to SAP, which makes a lot of sense from a financial point of view. Does it also not make sense - I'm interested to know your opinion on this - whether it makes sense to also move the way that all other departments do, which is whatever that amount is annually, which, somebody else can do the math, is probably around \$50,000 or something, on April 1<sup>st</sup>. I realize January 1<sup>st</sup> to March 31<sup>st</sup> is going to be complicated, no matter what - does that \$50,000 just end up in the account and then you draw down from that on the year, so there is no budget implication of this? Would that not simplify that problem?

MS. LUSBY: That could be done. In fact we agreed at the last meeting that for advertising it's going to be a maximum up to \$5,000 annually, as opposed to limiting it to an amount per month but I don't know the history on why perhaps it was a maximum per month. It may be to assist the members in budgeting, so that they don't spend all their money  
...

MR. YOUNGER: I would hope that MLAs would have the ability to budget \$50,000 when they're dealing with the billions of dollars in provincial money.

AN HON. MEMBER: Don't be sure of that. (Interruptions)

MR. CHAIRMAN: I have Mr. MacDonald and then Mr. Ferguson.

MR. MANNING MACDONALD: I'd just like to know why it's so complicated to put our expenses up on-line. It seems like we're reinventing the whole system just to put something up on-line. Isn't there a simpler way to just put the damn expenses on-line and be done with it? How much is this going to cost us?

MR. CHAIRMAN: I think we're trying to work within the SAP system. It is new to us, but it is not new to government and we're just trying to comply within the government system, I think. It's coming soon but we just want to make sure we're going to do it right.

MR. MANNING MACDONALD: Well, it shouldn't be rocket science to put expenses up on-line but this seems to be a big deal going on here just to do that.

MR. CHAIRMAN: It's soon going to be there.

MR. MANNING MACDONALD: It's an observation, that's all.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Okay, thank you. Mr. Ferguson.



MR. NEIL FERGUSON: I think one of the reasons that it's not a global account that you can use up as you wish through the year is there could be things like by-elections, general elections, members could come and go - it regulates the flow, if you would.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Okay, Mr. Younger.

MR. YOUNGER: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. That makes some sense. I'm not really tied one way or the other. My concern is that the system we've created has MLAs bankrolling the Province of Nova Scotia at the moment. What this will do by not allowing the out-of-pocket portion will just further that.

I know in speaking with the two new members that it is more challenging for them than it is for any of us and we will all be in that position on January 1<sup>st</sup>. It's just something to consider because it would probably also simplify the regulations. I understand what you're saying, there's probably a way to deal with that.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Ms. Lusby, was there anything further you wanted to comment on?

MS. LUSBY: Just the last page. There's a comment on the annual adjustment that Section 52 in the regulations allows for annual increases to come into effect on January 1<sup>st</sup>, tied to the CPI increase for Nova Scotia in the previous year, and recommends that the regulations be changed to April 1<sup>st</sup> for these increases to come into effect, which is when it normally does for the government as well.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Okay, thank you. So that's a report or an update on where we are on this MLA expenses on-line. I guess the start date for it to get there is maybe what Mr. MacDonald was referring to. What's anticipated, or what are we . . .

MS. LUSBY: We're still working towards November claims to be entered in SAP with the detail so that we can have a member's report available, say, by the end of December, once we get some information accumulated. November 1<sup>st</sup> doesn't mean that we get a member's claim on November 1<sup>st</sup>. It could be we're getting October's claim on November 1<sup>st</sup>, so only when we first get the member's November claims is when we'll start entering them into SAP, and if we're not ready to do everybody's at that time, then we'll start with December 1<sup>st</sup>. What we're really doing is using the next few months as a test basis for the data entry and for the reports so that by next year, for April 1<sup>st</sup> onward to the following March 31<sup>st</sup>, you'll have a full history of members' expenses on-line.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Very good. Are there any further questions for our director of administration on the process here?

MS. LUSBY: Could I have one more comment?

MR. CHAIRMAN: Yes, of course.

MS. LUSBY: Just to Mr. MacDonald's comment, it is a little bit cumbersome right now, but what we've done is selected the process that is most automated for the future. The method that we had in the office was doing data entry in one system and then we were entering it again into the government system. In the long run, this will be the most efficient and automated process.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you. If there are no further questions on that item we'll move along on the agenda to No. 5, regulation clarifications. We had a number of these at our last commission meeting and we have a number here today. I'm going to ask our Acting Chief Clerk to lead us through this. Mr. Ferguson.

MR. FERGUSON: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Much like last time, the ones that are more operational, Ms. Lusby is going to address and I'm going to deal with some of the things that are very minor, technical, housekeeping matters. You have two documents: one is Regulation Clarifications and/or Recommended Amendments, and the second is a resolution. I think I'll deal first with the resolution which covers Nos. 1, 6, 7 and 8 on your list of items to be dealt with.

Some of these things are grammatical errors that are being fixed. For example, on the resolution it's saying, delete the words "usage for" and substitute "use of". The sentence quite bizarrely said "a charge for usage for that accommodation" which didn't read very clearly, so it will just be "use of".

In Section 30(1), there is an old reference to "Board" which was the term used for the Internal Economy Board and when that regulation was brought forward it was missed, so that should be changed to "Commission" and that's the second item on the resolution.

Nos. 3 and 4 deal with Section 31(7) and (8) which have unnecessary words in them. They refer to the Whip of each recognized Party of the House or the caucus chair of each recognized Party of the House - and "recognized party" is defined at the beginning of the regulation, so those are unnecessary words.

Section 39 of the regulations deals with the expense for motor vehicles for the Leaders of the Opposition and Progressive Conservative Party. Right now it says that Leaders "... are entitled to a leased motor vehicle on the same basis as is a member of the Executive Council for a government leased or purchased motor vehicle." Since the government does not provide leased vehicles any longer, we're just suggesting that this be reworded to say: payment of the same motor vehicle operation expenses as a member of the Executive Council. It's just bringing it forward to the new way of doing things under those provisions.

In several places in the regulations, there are mixed-up terms. In some places we're talking about the Speaker; in fact, most of the regulations refer to the Speaker. A couple, when they were added in the drafting process, refer to the Chairman of the House of Assembly Management Commission. Fewer words are better and it should be consistent throughout, so we're just saying change it to Speaker where that occurs.

That is also the gist of No. 8.

Finally, if you go back to No. 7, the regulations have a reference to the Consolidated Fund and under the new Finance Act it's the General Revenue Fund. So those very boring items are just to clear up some errors in the regulations. Thank you for listening.

MR. CHAIRMAN: So you're suggesting that these eight parts of this resolution be handled as one and they apply to Nos. 1, 6, 7 and 8 on the regulation clarifications page, is it?

MR. FERGUSON: Yes, and the item about the Consolidated Fund was something I added after we had set up the list because I had only noticed it at that point. So yes, it covers those items plus the change from Consolidated Fund to General Revenue Fund.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Okay. I guess we're open for a motion to accept this resolution as presented, which would apply to Nos. 1, 6, 7 and 8 of our clarifications. Is anyone prepared to make that motion?

MR. YOUNGER: I so move.

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

The motion is carried.

So that takes care of Nos. 1, 6, 7 and 8, but we still have some other sections on our clarifications. Mr. Ferguson.

MR. FERGUSON: As I mentioned earlier, some of these are quite operational, so Ms. Lusby is going to move forward with Nos. 2, 3, 4, 5 and 9, I believe.

MS. LUSBY: Okay, No. 2 is dealing with Section 19 which is about constituency offices and we wanted to clean up three different sections there, Section 19(1), (5) and (9). Section 19(1) says, "The member shall research and locate appropriate office space . . ." and then Section 19(5) says, "The member shall lease space in a building owned or primarily occupied by the Government of the Province . . ." if such space is available. What we're recommending is that we kind of blend those two, Section 19(1) and (5) together to be rephrased to say: The member shall research and locate appropriate office space . . . TIR as a resource available to the member, as they may have available space in a building owned or primarily occupied by the Government of Nova Scotia. Then remove Section 19(5).

[2:30 p.m.]

Section 19(9) is referencing that the commission will work with TIR on locating space for members. That's more of an initiative than a regulation, and it's suggested that come out as well.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Okay, thank you. I guess the way to proceed would be with a motion to accept those changes.

MR. SMITH: I so move.

MR. YOUNGER: I second the motion.

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

The motion is carried.

Okay, that was No. 2. No. 3.

MS. LUSBY: No. 3 is relating to Section 21 for office expenses. Bank fees which would be monthly, or Interac fees, money order fees, cheque orders, et cetera, are not included as allowable expenses. Considering the burden of proof on the members for showing proof of payment, then using their bank statements or cheques for payment, we suggest they be included as an item under Section 21(1)(m) as "any other items . . . directed by the Commission," that those types of expenses be approved.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Is someone prepared to make that a motion? Mr. Gosse. Is there a seconder? Ms. Birdsall.

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

The motion is carried.

No. 4.

MS. LUSBY: I'm going to take No. 4 off this list.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Okay, No. 5.

MS. LUSBY: It refers to Section 23(11), a very minor point. Just wanted to clarify that this applies to: Where a new member wishes to have a House asset replaced from the outgoing member - just adding the word "new" in the first line.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Is somebody prepared to make that a motion?

MR. CORBETT: I so move.

MR. YOUNGER: I second it.

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

The motion is carried.

No. 9, is it?

MS. LUSBY: No. 9, another minor point, I hope; 41(2)(d) is on support services for an independent member. It stipulates one phone line is permitted and that should be similar as our furniture and equipment allowance where we suggest it should reflect the number of staff working in the office and not be limited to one.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Okay, is anybody prepared to make that a motion? Ms. Birdsall, seconder, Mr. d'Entremont. Any discussion? The question has been called.

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

The motion is carried.

That takes care of our amendments and regulation clarifications at this point in time. Do you expect there will be more to come or are we pretty well getting caught up on them?

MS. LUSBY: Caught up.

MR. CHAIRMAN: We're getting closer to it? Mr. MacDonald.

MR. MANNING MACDONALD: Mr. Chairman, on No. 3 there, just an observation that it doesn't state here. Unless I'm missing it in the original regulation, is that a go-forward position or is that retroactive and how far retroactive is it? Bank statements and the monthly fees and that.

MR. CHAIRMAN: I don't know if that's been decided, but do you have a suggestion?

MR. MANNING MACDONALD: I just wondered how far you go back, to when the new regulations were or do you go forward from this month on? (Interruption) Go forward, yes, that's fine.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Go forward, is that agreed?

Is it agreed that we go forward on that issue?

It is agreed.

Okay, that takes care of No. 5 on our agenda.

No. 6 was the annual open house for MLAs. A number of MLAs have had an annual open house, either at Christmastime or at another time of the year. I think this was deferred from our last commission meeting and we were asking for input from the caucuses on what would be a reasonable amount to spend and any criteria around that. So I guess we are open for suggestions on perhaps what was decided amongst the caucuses. Mr. Smith.

MR. SMITH: I guess in this room I'm probably the newest elected member - it will be a year tomorrow.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Happy Anniversary (Interruptions)

MR. SMITH: I did last December have an open house, which was well received by the community. My office is on Main Street and we had a lot of people dropping in. It was a fun time and I think people appreciate the fact that the door is open and we had that kind of thing.

I would like to recommend that we continue on with this. It's an optional thing, people can do it or not do it if they want. Knowing what I spent last year, I think if we peg the amount that we're allowed to spend on this at 10 per cent of what our monthly allowance is, that would be consistent with what we can spend on advertising, as a figure, and I certainly think would cover what would be the cost.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Your suggestion, then, is 10 per cent of our monthly allowance. That would be \$419.80 - roughly \$420, we'll say - so that's a suggestion, okay. I think Mr. MacDonald, do you want to speak on it?

MR. MANNING MACDONALD: I was going to suggest the same thing, only to be more specific, that would be one month, one monthly allowance. You could interpret that by 10 per cent of a month, just once a year. You are not restricting it to December?

MR. SMITH: No, because I think some people have a barbeque in the summer kind of thing, but it's one a year - sorry.

MR. MANNING MACDONALD: As in past practice, no alcoholic beverages.

MR. SMITH: No alcoholic beverages.

MR. MANNING MACDONALD: Okay. I got Chris on that one.

MR. CHAIRMAN: So I'm hearing a suggestion that the open house be limited to an amount of \$419.80, or 10 per cent of our monthly allowance. I guess if that were to change,

that's what it is at the present time, at any time of the year but one per year, up to that maximum. Is somebody prepared to make that a motion?

MR. YOUNGER: I don't mind making a motion but I . . .

MR. CHAIRMAN: It has been moved by Mr. Younger. Is there a seconder for that?

MR. YOUNGER: I actually wanted to ask a question.

MR. CHAIRMAN: We'll come to that. Is there a seconder? (Interruption) Okay, the motion is on the floor. It has been moved and seconded. Now Mr. Younger.

MR. YOUNGER: My question was really for our two lawyers - well, the two paid lawyers, I'm sure there are other lawyers in the room. I understand where Mo is going, but from a drafting point of view, is it simpler to just put a straight number in there, as opposed to - it doesn't make any difference?

MR. HEBB: Either is equally easy to do, which I think Mr. Corbett has pointed out, really. If you make it a percentage, then it will automatically change when the amount changes.

MR. YOUNGER: Fine, it will change by about 50 cents when the CPI goes up by 0.06 per cent next year or something.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Any other discussion on the motion? The motion is to allow an annual open house once a year, the expenditure to be 10 per cent of the monthly allowance. I heard a suggestion that it would include no alcoholic beverages, but that is implied.

I guess somebody had asked me the other day whether advertising for that particular open house is included in your open house allowance or would that be in your advertising budget. I don't quite know the answer, but I'm just throwing it out here for any clarification. Should that be included in your advertising budget or should that be included in your open house allowance? Any thoughts on that? Mr. Corbett.

MR. CORBETT: If I may, Mr. Chairman, I would think it's an advertisement, it's advertising an event so it is separate. I would think it should be in your advertising budget because I think Mr. Smith's motion was to the point of the total cost of what the actual open house would be and then I think if you are going to advertise it, it is advertising. That's my interpretation.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Okay, I appreciate the clarification on that. Ms. Lusby.

MS. LUSBY: If you distributed the information of your event in your communications, then it is definitely under communications and not included in advertising.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Okay, thank you. Any other discussion on the motion? Ready for the question?

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

The motion is carried.

Item No. 7 is future meeting dates. Now we have outlined some possible future dates here. I did ask earlier of our Clerk if there were many more regulations coming forward and that was some of the reason for having these meeting dates outlined but apparently there's not a whole lot more available. There are some suggested dates there and I'll open the floor for discussion. Mr. Corbett.

MR. CORBETT: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. In very quick discussion with the other two House Leaders, you know that a week from Thursday the House is going back into session and obviously November 9<sup>th</sup> and 30<sup>th</sup> we will be in session and it puts some constraints on us being able to do any pre-meeting and get together. With what Mr. Ferguson has just advised us, with the agreement of the committee, maybe we would look at a time in December to have another meeting and not utilize the meeting time in November on November 9<sup>th</sup> and 30<sup>th</sup>.

It would be my wish that I would put forward that we would meet some time in the first week of December and not use those two dates in November.

MR. CHAIRMAN: I might make a suggestion, perhaps. I think it is December 8<sup>th</sup> that we are going to have the Speaker's Christmas reception, as always. I think it is normally from 2:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m. and I am just wondering if that particular morning might be an idea to hold such a meeting, since we're in town, or hopefully in town, that same day. Mr. MacDonald.

MR. MANNING MACDONALD: I agree with the Government House Leader. Just to clarify, though, in case there is an issue that needs to be dealt with, we are available to meet but just meeting for the sake of meeting, I think December would be a great time for that, December 8<sup>th</sup>.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Can we leave it perhaps at the chairman's discretion to find a date  
...

MR. CORBETT: At the call of the chairman.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Okay, unless, as was mentioned, something vital, something important, something really necessary to get together to have a meeting, we can arrange that. Otherwise, it will be some time in early December.

Is that agreed?



It is agreed.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Agreed, okay. Is there any other business to come before the commission?

AN HON. MEMBER: Move to adjourn.

MR. CHAIRMAN: There is a motion to adjourn. We are adjourned.

[The committee adjourned at 2:42 p.m.]