

# **HANSARD**

**NOVA SCOTIA HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY**

## **HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY MANAGEMENT COMMISSION**

**Thursday, December 19, 2013**

**Red Room, Province House**

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**HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY  
MANAGEMENT COMMISSION**

Hon. Kevin Murphy (Chairman)  
Hon. Michel Samson  
Ms. Margaret Miller  
Hon. Labi Kousoulis  
Mr. Lloyd Hines  
Hon. Christopher d'Entremont  
Hon. Frank Corbett  
Mr. Neil Ferguson, Chief Clerk of the House of Assembly  
(Non-Voting Member)

[Hon. Michel Samson was replaced by Hon. Andrew Younger.]  
[Hon. Frank Corbett was replaced by Hon. David Wilson.]

**In Attendance:**

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

Ms. Annette Boucher  
Assistant Clerk  
House of Assembly

Mr. Gordon Hebb  
Chief Legislative Counsel

**HALIFAX, THURSDAY, DECEMBER 19, 2013**

**HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY MANAGEMENT COMMISSION**

**1:30 P.M.**

**CHAIRMAN**  
Hon. Kevin Murphy

MR. CHAIRMAN: It's after 1:30 p.m. and we have a quorum. With that, I will call the meeting of the House of Assembly Management Commission to order for Thursday, December 19<sup>th</sup>.

I believe what we'll do - all the materials have been circulated so for purposes of the written record, where there are new people around the table, I think we'll just go around and state for the record who you are, and if you are here as a substitute please indicate who you are here as a substitute for.

[The commission members introduced themselves.]

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you very much. Is that everybody or is there somebody who is still not here? Okay, great, so we now have 100 per cent attendance. Before we get into the agenda, which of course has been circulated, if we're all in agreement, we'll take care of the in camera agenda item at the end of the regular business, just to save a little logistical confusion with people coming and going and the recordings. Everybody is okay with that? Okay.

We'll move on to Item 1 under regular business, which is the approval of the May 30, 2013 and August 14, 2013 minutes. I'll turn that over to the Chief Clerk, Mr. Neil Ferguson.

MR. NEIL FERGUSON: Mr. Chairman, the packages have been circulated and are before you. The reason that there are two sets of minutes is that the August 14<sup>th</sup> meeting was specifically to deal with the barrier-free requirements. We didn't cover the minutes from the previous meeting, but they're both in your packages and it would be appropriate, unless somebody has a problem with what's in the minutes, to have a motion to approve both sets.

MR. CHAIRMAN: There's a motion to approve by Mr. Younger, seconded by Mr. d'Entremont.

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

The motion is carried.

Moving on to Item 2, appointments to the House of Assembly Management Commission Audit Committee - I'll turn that over to Neil Ferguson as well.

MR. FERGUSON: The Audit Committee is required to have in its complement two members of the commission. It hasn't been able to meet because it doesn't have quorum and since we're here, it seems appropriate to have somebody move the appointment. I understand that the two members of the commission that have been agreed on through the striking committee are Mr. Kousoulis and Mr. d'Entremont. (Interruptions)

MR. CHAIRMAN: It was moved by Lloyd Hines, seconded by the honourable Minister of Energy.

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

The motion is carried.

We'll go back to the Chief Clerk, Mr. Ferguson.

MR. FERGUSON: Note also in the resolution package there is a requirement that we appoint the Auditor General as the auditor of the accounts. Normally this would happen on recommendation of the Audit Committee which, as I said, has not been able to meet, so you have a resolution that says that subject to the recommendation of the Audit Committee that the commission is going to appoint the Auditor General again this year as the auditor of the accounts of the House, so if somebody would like to move that.

MR. CHAIRMAN: It was moved by Minister Younger, seconded by Mr. d'Entremont.

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

The motion is carried.

We'll move on to Item 3 on the agenda - approval of new franking and travel allowances. For that, I'll turn that over to Legislative Counsel Gordon Hebb.

MR. GORDON HEBB: You have a sheet setting out the constituencies and the proposed amounts. These needed to be changed because of the redistribution and a lot of the constituencies have changed in size or they're new constituencies. There are some missing as well.

The proposed amounts are an attempt to have as little change in the total budget as possible. You'll notice it will cost an additional \$562. That was an attempt to arrive at the same total amount as before.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Are there questions?

MR. LLOYD HINES: If I could, I seek your indulgence here as being a newly elected MLA, representing 5,266.66 square kilometres versus my good friend in Halifax Chebucto with 4.56 square kilometres. I just need a little understanding. My understanding is that this is a revision that reflects the ridings, which we've entered in the last election on October 8<sup>th</sup>. Is that correct? Is that what this is? Is there a change in that amount that reflects that? Because in the members' expense book it seemed that was what the particular allowance was at that time.

My question is, is there recognition of the fact that in that particular riding there was a significant increase in the geography, and a number of representatives and electors that were included - how was that affected?

MR. CHAIRMAN: I'll turn that over to Gordon.

MR. HEBB: What was done - I suppose in a way the answer is simply no. What was done was the same categories of additional amounts were used as before so the amounts there, the standard amount being \$14,059 and then the additional higher amounts of \$15,000 and a little bit above - \$16,000, \$17,000 and \$18,000 - there was no change made in any of those amounts.

Your constituency, which was already in the highest category, we didn't create a new, higher category. We merely attempted to achieve the same total amount using the existing categories and drawing the lines between them in what we thought were appropriate spots.

MR. HINES: Mr. Chairman, what was the purpose of the exercise then?

MR. CHAIRMAN: Again, I'll turn that over to Gordon.

MR. HEBB: Well, there were new constituencies so the present regulations talk about the existing constituencies, some of which no longer exist and there are new ones, so the regulations need to reflect the present constituencies.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Mr. Younger.

HON. ANDREW YOUNGER: The proposal before us was agreed to by all three caucuses, is my understanding after reviewing it. We're in an existing budget year and so we obviously have to deal with the existing budget as it now stands.

I think those of us who have been on this commission before - Chris and I, anyway - know that franking and travel have been an issue for a long time because even in the urban side, the postage costs tend to be higher than the average rural riding. But at the end of the day this was looking at how we manage the 51 new ridings within the budget of the 52 previous, under the existing regulations. The Management Commission always has the ability to look in the future if they want to change things, but the reality is that we're halfway through a fiscal year and we have to deal with the existing budget as closely as we possibly can.

HON. CHRISTOPHER D'ENTREMONT: Even to the point that these are representative of maximums, and there's probably very few, I don't know how many constituencies actually make the maximum but I'm going to bet you that it's not too many, anyway, when it comes to franking and travel. Of course this is just representative of that.

And yes, we are in the current year so not that we're asking for a lot of extra here, it's just being representative of the new constituencies.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Mr. Wilson.

HON. DAVID WILSON: It was my understanding that any changes to this were going to come at a future meeting. I know our House Leader did obtain this, did not caucus it yet because we were in the session and he believed that it was coming up.

So two things; the first is, in the future are we going to look at questions from all members? Listen, I'm the sixth smallest so I don't believe mine will ever change but there has to be a recognition, I think, of the changes. So are we going to be looking at this in the future and is it worthwhile changing right now?

For one, we didn't caucus the changes, which I don't know if there are minor changes, why would it be here at this meeting and not dealt with maybe down the road, at a next meeting?

MR. CHAIRMAN: Mr. Younger.

MR. YOUNGER: Technically they're not supposed to be paying people at the moment who have different riding names because the riding names are all the old 52, so it has to be changed now in order to legally reimburse people for the expenses they are incurring in the new ridings.

To answer your question, we could even make it - I mean this is an ongoing thing that people need to sort out the travel and franking because you and I both have an urban riding and our postage costs could easily hit much higher. I remember that Junior Theriault used to be able to mail to his whole riding for about \$300; it costs me \$2,000, probably the same for you.

It is something that should be looked at but it would be looked at by this commission, I think, before they do - you'd be looking at a budget pretty soon, I would think. If I remember from last year, we looked at this - and Chris may remember - I think in the January time frame is when we looked at what the budget would be.

MR. CHAIRMAN: It's certainly up to the will of the commission, as far as I understand it, that if we want to look at changing it in any way moving forward, we certainly can add that to the agenda.

MR. YOUNGER: The issue is a short-term issue that nobody technically can be reimbursed at the moment . . .

MR. CHAIRMAN: Mr. Hines.

MR. HINES: Mr. Chairman, I understand that now, in the context of the current budget year and would expect that in the fullness of time this will be looked at as we move forward into the new budget year, so thank you very much for that.

MR. CHAIRMAN: I'll turn it over to the Chief Clerk.

MR. FERGUSON: Just for the information of the commission, the Assistant Clerk has just distributed the resolution that accomplishes what was set out on the table. That would be the resolution that would be required to be moved by somebody.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The resolution is moved by Mr. Younger and seconded by Mr. d'Entremont.

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

The motion is carried.

We'll move on to Item 4 on the agenda, which is the approval of the House of Assembly 2012-13 financial statements, which have been distributed.

I'll turn it over to Deborah Lusby.

MS. DEBORAH LUSBY: The financial statements are included in your package, and the Audit Committee has reviewed them and is recommending them to the commission for approval. Annette has done up a resolution for that approval, which is also included in your package. The statement of most interest is on Page 6, if you want to look at that. (Interruption) It's exactly the same. A year or so ago we approved 2010-11 and 2011-12, and now we're approving 2012-13.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Moved by Mr. Younger and seconded by Mr. Hines.

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

The motion is carried.

Moving on to Item 5, the 2013-14 first- and second-quarter financial reviews - I'll turn it over to Ms. Lusby.

MS. LUSBY: Again, this is the long spreadsheet that's included in your package with all the little tiny numbers. We're reviewing the first and second quarter, as we didn't have a commission meeting in between that period of time. On the far right, we should be at 50 per cent of our target, and in the majority of cases we are below that in our spending. The third-quarter report, which will be as of December 30<sup>th</sup>, will be of more interest because we will have had the election between that period of time and there will be changes in our forecast, but basically this report, there's nothing of significance to report.

MR. CHAIRMAN: This is for information only. Are there any questions on that for Deborah before we move on?

We'll move on to Item 6. Is there any other business? Barring any other business, we'll move on to the in camera portion.

[The commission's public session adjourned at 1:48 p.m.]