

HANSARD

NOVA SCOTIA HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY

HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY MANAGEMENT COMMISSION

Wednesday, December 16, 2020

Via Video Conference

Printed and Published by Nova Scotia Hansard Reporting Services

HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY MANAGEMENT COMMISSION

Hon. Kevin Murphy (Chair)

Hon. Geoff MacLellan

Rafah DiCostanzo

Brendan Maguire

Hon. Chuck Porter

Allan MacMaster

Karla MacFarlane

Claudia Chender

James Charlton, Chief Clerk of the House of Assembly
(Non-Voting Member)

In Attendance:

Speaker's Office Adviser

Deborah Lusby
Director of Administration
Office of the Speaker

Gordon Hebb
Chief Legislative Counsel



House of Assembly
Nova Scotia

HALIFAX, WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 16, 2020

HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY MANAGEMENT COMMISSION

3:00 P.M.

CHAIR
Hon. Kevin Murphy

THE CHAIR: Order, please. Good afternoon, everybody, and welcome to the first virtual meeting of the House of Assembly Management Commission. My name is Kevin Murphy. I'll be the Chair for today's meeting.

As this is our first time going 100 per cent virtual, I'll take a couple of minutes just to go through a couple of housekeeping items. All of our meeting materials were circulated in advance; hopefully, everybody received those. You have the contact information for the attending clerk today to reach out if you did not or if you have any questions in the meantime.

We want to remind everybody - although many of you experienced the committee meetings by now on the virtual side, I'd just like to ask you to please keep your microphones muted unless it's your turn to speak or you're called upon to speak. Please wait for the Chair to recognize you so that Legislative Television can follow along and unmute your microphone for you. Please indicate if you wish to speak by raising your hand and I as the Chair will recognize you.

When we do go for a vote, I'll ask you to raise your hand and make sure that it's visible in front of the screen. That's the way that I'll conduct the votes. I will also remind you if you have your cell phones or office or home landlines to put them on mute or shut the ringers off.

Before we get into our agenda, I'll do roll call and ask the members who are joining us here today to introduce themselves and state their constituencies. We'll start with Mr. MacLellan.

[The committee members introduced themselves.]

THE CHAIR: I would like to take a second to acknowledge and introduce the staff that are here with us today. We have Deborah Lusby from the Speaker's Administration Office. We have Chief Legislative Counsel Gordon Hebb with us here today. I'm also very pleased to introduce our new Chief Clerk for the Nova Scotia House of Assembly who just started a short few days ago with us. I'm very pleased to welcome to our staff and our Assembly family Mr. James Charlton. Welcome, James.

I would be remiss if I did not acknowledge for the record the outgoing Acting Chief Clerk, Ms. Annette Boucher, who is retiring effective Friday. She'll be no longer part of our family, but I do want on behalf of all members and certainly this commission to thank her for her service and dedication over the years. We're going to miss her and we want to wish her good luck in her future endeavours.

We'll move on to our agenda. Again, all the materials have been circulated in advance. Our first item of business is the approval of our minutes from the October 28, 2020 meeting. Are there any questions or comments on those minutes?

Seeing none, could I have a motion to approve those minutes?

HON. GEOFF MACLELLAN: So moved.

THE CHAIR: Moved by Minister MacLellan. Seconded by Minister Porter.

Would all those in favour of the motion please raise your hand. All those opposed, please raise your hand.

The motion is carried.

We'll now move on to the next item on our agenda, which is the appointment of our Audit Committee member, and I will turn it over to Assistant Clerk Nicole, or Chief Clerk James.

JAMES CHARLTON: Section 15 of the House of Assembly Management Commission actually requires two members of the commission to be selected by the

commission as members of the Audit Committee. The Honourable Labi Kousoulis was the Executive Council member on the commission selected by the commission as one of those two members of the Audit Committee. Mr. Kousoulis resigned as an Executive Council member to be a leadership candidate, and as a result he is no longer a member of the commission, nor a member of the Audit Committee. Therefore, a motion is required to select a current commission member to serve on the committee.

THE CHAIR: Ms. DiCostanzo.

RAFAH DISCOSTANZO: I have a motion here. Be it resolved that, pursuant to Section 15 of the House of Assembly Management Commission Act, the House of Assembly Management Commission hereby appoints member Honourable Geoff MacLellan as a member of the commission's Audit Committee for the term commencing December 16, 2020, to continue until such time as he is replaced by the commission.

THE CHAIR: Thank you very much. Moved by Ms. DiCostanzo. Do we have a seconder? Minister Porter. Would all those in favour of the motion please raise your hand. Any opposed, please raise your hand.

The motion is carried.

We will now move on to the next item on our agenda, which is the receipt of the 2019-2020 audit report, and I will recognize Chief Clerk James Charlton, who will take us through that.

JAMES CHARLTON: The Independent Practitioner's Reasonable Assurance Report on the Chief Clerk's Assessment of Internal Controls and Whether Internal Controls are Operating Effectively in Accordance With Section 22(5)(c) of the House of Assembly Management Commission Act was circulated in advance of today's meeting to members of the commission. The report was presented to the Audit Committee at their November 24th meeting by representatives of the Nova Scotia Office of the Auditor General. The report contains two unmodified opinions as follows:

- (a) An unmodified opinion that the House of Assembly expenditures are in compliance with the House of Assembly Management Commission policies and, where applicable, the policies of the Public Service for the year ending March 31, 2020; and
- (b) An unmodified opinion for the House of Assembly on the Chief Clerk's assessment of the effectiveness of internal controls and that the internal controls of the House of Assembly are operating effectively.

THE CHAIR: Mr. MacMaster for the motion. I guess before we do that, are there any questions or comments on that? Hearing none, we'll turn it over to Mr. MacMaster for a motion.

ALLAN MACMASTER: I move that the Auditor General's 2019-2020 report be accepted as presented.

THE CHAIR: Do we have a seconder on that motion? Ms. DiCostanzo, thank you. Would all those in favour please signify by raising your hand. All those opposed, please signify by raising your hand.

The motion is carried.

The last item on our agenda is the appointment of the auditors, and I will ask Mr. MacMaster, as the PC House Leader and a member of the Audit Committee to put forth a motion. Mr. MacMaster.

ALLAN MACMASTER: I move that in accordance with the recommendation of the Audit Committee of the House of Assembly Management Commission made at their November 24, 2020, meeting that the Nova Scotia Auditor General be appointed as auditor of the accounts of the House of Assembly for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2021, pursuant to Section 22 of the House of Assembly Management Commission Act.

THE CHAIR: Any questions or comments on that motion? Hearing none, I'll ask for a seconder. Seconded by Mr. MacLellan. Would all those in favour please signify by raising your hand. All those opposed, please signify by raising your hand.

The motion is carried.

That concludes our agenda. I'll entertain a motion to adjourn. Motion made by Minister MacLellan, seconded by Mr. Maguire. Would all those in favour of the motion please signify by raising your hand. Any opposed, please signify by raising your hand.

The motion is carried.

Our meeting is adjourned. Thank you very much, everybody, and Merry Christmas and happy and safe holidays.

[The commission adjourned at 3:11 p.m.]