

HANSARD

NOVA SCOTIA HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY

HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY MANAGEMENT COMMISSION

Thursday, January 28, 2021

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, JANUARY 28, 2021

HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY MANAGEMENT COMMISSION

2:08 P.M.

CHAIR

Hon. Kevin Murphy

THE CHAIR: Order, please. Good afternoon, everybody. I'd like to call the January 28th meeting of the House of Assembly Management Commission to order.

Just before we get into our agenda, I just want to remind all of our participants of the following housekeeping items. Please keep your microphones muted until you are called upon to speak. Please wait until the Chair recognizes you, and then unmute your mic to speak and re-mute when you're finished, and indicate that you wish to speak by raising your hand physically on the screen and I'll keep an eye out to acknowledge you.

I remind everybody in attendance to place your phones or other devices that you have within earshot on silent or vibrate.

I'm going to ask the committee members to introduce themselves as I call their names, and if you could state your constituency along with your name that would be great. We'll begin with Minister MacLellan.

[The committee members introduced themselves.]

THE CHAIR: Just while we're on that, for purposes of the committee's benefit, can we have consent that it's okay for Mr. Maguire to participate with audio only?

ALLAN MACMASTER: Mr. Chair?

THE CHAIR: Yes, go ahead, Allan.

ALLAN MACMASTER: Sorry, I didn't intend to raise my hand. I think if we're attending these meetings that we should be here in form, and that being in both audio and video format. I just think it's important if we're treating these meetings like we would be there in person, that we should be visible as well as being able to be heard through the audio.

THE CHAIR: Duly noted. I appreciate that, and I think Mr. Maguire is having some technical difficulties, as stated earlier.

BRENDAN MAGUIRE: If Allan wants, we can wait off on the meeting until I get technical support here to fix my video.

THE CHAIR: Ms. MacFarlane.

KARLA MACFARLANE: I think that what Allan and I had noticed, all of our meetings so far, there have been audio/video trouble. I think for clarification perhaps, Mr. Maguire would like to explain to us why it has been taking so long to get his video corrected. We understand through other committee meetings as well, the same issue has persisted.

Definitely, sometimes there are technical challenges. We just experienced that right now with signing on, but this has been a repetitive action and maybe we could just understand better.

The one thing that I noticed when you did send out the rules and regulations of having these virtual meetings was that we had to be visible, so that has been a concern. We've been hearing stories from others as well so we just want a little bit of clarification, that's all.

THE CHAIR: I appreciate that. We'll ensure that all of our members who participate in the House of Assembly Management Commission meetings on a go-forward basis are present with both audio and video. If they need to schedule some dedicated time with Legislative Television staff to work out the bugs, so to speak, then we'll ensure that happens.

For clarification, for purposes of today's meeting, are we okay with Mr. Maguire participating via audio only? Raise your hands. Thank you.

[The committee members introduced themselves.]

THE CHAIR: I do want to acknowledge that we have staff from all three of the caucus offices on the line with their videos turned off. We welcome everybody.

All of our materials for today's meeting were circulated in advance. We'll move on to item number one on our agenda which is looking for an approval of the minutes from our December 16, 2020 meeting. Are there any questions or comments on those minutes? Hearing none, I'll look for a motion from Ms. DiCostanzo. Seconded by Mr. Porter.

Would all those in favour of the motion please raise your hand. Contrary minded, raise your hand.

The motion is carried.

We'll now move on to item number two, which is the third quarter financials. For that, I'll turn it over to Ms. Lusby.

DEBORAH LUSBY: Per usual, these are circulated in advance. If you have any questions, please be sure to send them along to me. One thing to note is that normally at the end of the third quarter, which is December 31st, we would normally be expected to spend around 75 per cent of our budgets. As you can see, we're not near that amount, mainly due to reduced travel due to COVID-19 in 2020, and still ongoing.

[2:15 p.m.]

THE CHAIR: Thank you. Any other questions or comments for Ms. Lusby on the third quarter financials?

Hearing none, I have a big, bold note here from the Clerk that there's no motion required for these at this time, it's for information purposes only for the committee, so we'll move on to item number three, which is the approval of the 2020 Annual Report of the Audit Committee, and for that I'll ask Chief Clerk Charlton to speak to that.

JAMES CHARLTON: The 2020 Annual Report of the Audit Committee of the House of Assembly Management Commission was circulated to everyone in advance of the meeting. The report summarizes the duties, composition, and activities of the Audit Committee and was approved by the Audit Committee at its January 12, 2021, meeting. Unless there are any questions, a motion to approve the report would be in order.

THE CHAIR: Any questions? Mr. MacMaster.

ALLAN MACMASTER: I was just going to move that the report be approved.

THE CHAIR: If there are no questions, we'll take the motion from Mr. MacMaster and a seconder from Ms. DiCostanzo. Would all those in favour of the motion please raise your hand, or for those on audio only, say yea. Contrary minded, raise your hand.

The motion is carried.

We now move on to the next item, which is the approval of the 2020 Annual Report of the House of Assembly Management Commission, and again back to Chief Clerk Charlton.

JAMES CHARLTON: At the risk of sounding repetitive, the 2020 Annual Report of the House of Assembly Management Commission was also circulated to all members in advance of today's meeting, and like the Audit Committee report, this report summarizes the mandate, composition, and activities of this Management Commission. I might also add it also includes a summary of the mandate, composition, and activities of Audit Committee, so it has a lot of that content baked into it.

Unless there are any questions, a motion to approve the report and to direct the Chair to table the report in the House of Assembly when the House next sits would be in order.

THE CHAIR: Any questions? No questions. I'll take a motion to approve this. Moved by Minister MacLellan. Seconder? Seconded by Mr. Maguire.

Would all those in favour of the motion please raise your hand, or for those who are audio only, say yea. Contrary minded, raise your hand.

The motion is carried.

Our last item for discussion here is a motion to approve our next meeting to be held virtually should it be required. Is there any discussion? Chief Clerk, do you have anything to add to that?

JAMES CHARLTON: Just to add that, of course the last two meetings we've polled all the members to obtain unanimous consent about meeting virtually. In the absence of any kind of motion, we will continue to do that as long as we need to hold these meetings virtually on account of the pandemic.

In the alternative, we could also pass a motion today to authorize the next one to be held virtually if you would like to do that rather than waiting for the polling.

THE CHAIR: Ms. Chender, you had your hand up.

CLAUDIA CHENDER: I would be fine to pass a motion today to meet virtually the next meeting. I don't think the requirement to poll us generally for virtual meetings is particularly onerous. It's not a huge committee, so I don't think I would support at this time removing that requirement for all meetings, but I'm happy to vote on a motion to do it for the next meeting.

THE CHAIR: Any other discussion? The motion is simply to allow the next immediate meeting of the House of Assembly Management Commission to meet virtually if necessary. Would all those in favour of the motion please raise your hand, or for those on audio only, say yea.

BRENDAN MAGUIRE: Yea.

THE CHAIR: Contrary minded, raise your hand.

The motion is carried.

I believe that concludes our business for today. Chief Clerk Charlton?

JAMES CHARLTON: I apologize, did we have a mover and a seconder for that motion?

THE CHAIR: We did not.

JAMES CHARLTON: I'm seeing a shake no from Gordon there.

THE CHAIR: I was excited at the last item. Do we have a mover, please? Ms. DiCostanzo. Secunder? Mr. MacLellan. We'll do the vote again just for clarity.

Would all those in favour of the motion please raise your hand. Contrary minded, Nay.

The motion is carried.

Thank you, our ever-diligent Chief Clerk and Legislative Counsel, for picking that up. We appreciate that.

That concludes our business for today. The meeting is adjourned.

[The committee adjourned at 2:20 p.m.]