

HANSARD

NOVA SCOTIA HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY

**HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY
MANAGEMENT COMMISSION**

Thursday, September 29, 2022

Video Conference

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HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY MANAGEMENT COMMISSION

Hon. Keith Bain (Chair)

Angela Simmonds

Hon. Kim Masland

Hon. Allan MacMaster

Danielle Barkhouse

Hon. Derek Mombourquette

Hon. Keith Irving

Susan Leblanc

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

In Attendance:

Speaker's Office Adviser

Matthew Timmons
Director of Operations and Administration
Office of the Speaker

Gordon Hebb
Chief Legislative Counsel

David Hastings
Assistant Clerk



House of Assembly
Nova Scotia

HALIFAX, THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 29, 2022

HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY MANAGEMENT COMMISSION

3:16 P.M.

CHAIR

Hon. Keith Bain

THE CHAIR: The meeting of the House of Assembly Management Commission is called to order.

Just a few reminders for everyone to keep your microphone muted until you are called upon to speak. Wait until after I, as Chair, recognize you to unmute your microphone. Since we are doing it by Zoom today, if you wish to speak, just raise your hand and wave it at me.

We'll begin with introductions. I'll introduce myself first.

[The commission members introduced themselves.]

THE CHAIR: We also have with us: Gordon Hebb, Chief Legislative Counsel; Matthew Timmons, Director of Operations and Administration; and Assistant Clerk David Hastings.

We'll begin with the approval of the minutes. The minutes were circulated in advance of this meeting, and I'm going to ask the committee if there are any corrections required to the minutes.

Hearing and seeing none, I'll ask for a motion to adopt the minutes of the July 5, 2022, meeting. Do we have a mover?

HON. KEITH IRVING: So moved.

THE CHAIR: Do we have a seconder?

DANIELLE BARKHOUSE: Seconded.

THE CHAIR: All those in favour? Contrary minded? Thank you.

The motion is carried.

The next item on the agenda is amendments to the House of Assembly Management Commission Regulations. A copy of those proposed amendments to Sections 31 and 32 of the House of Assembly Management Commission Regulations was circulated prior to this meeting.

I'm going to recognize our Chief Clerk, James Charlton, to speak to this item.

JAMES CHARLTON: Happy to do so. This is a pretty simple amendment, and this will change the way that the House Leaders, caucus chairs, and the whips are paid.

Currently under the regulation, the people in those positions are paid twice a year, in April and October. So their annual payment is split in two and paid in those two instalments. Because it's paid twice a year in that fashion, whoever is in the position at that time gets six months' pay. If there's a change in who occupies the position during the following six months, no money is paid back by the person who used to hold it and the next person is basically doing the job for free until the next pay period.

What this amendment will do is just regularize it, so that the pay will be split up over 26 equal pay periods, just like the MLA indemnities. The members in those positions will be paid for the actual time that they hold those positions - from the time that they are appointed to the position, to the time they leave the position. It's something of a housekeeping amendment in that regard.

The resolution that the Chair will ask for will have effect on October 1, 2022 - starting with the upcoming pay period in a few days. That's when we'll start the shift to just the regular payments. Happy to entertain any questions if there are any.

THE CHAIR: Are there any questions for clarification? Hearing and seeing none, I'll ask for a motion that the proposed amendment to Sections 31 and 32 of the House of Assembly Management Commission Regulations be approved to have effect on October 1, 2022.

Do we have a mover for that motion? Ms. Leblanc. Do we have a seconder? Ms. Simmonds.

All those in favour? Contrary minded? Thank you.

The motion is carried.

The next item is business that came up at the prior meeting, and that's an expenditure limit for events in relation to the Platinum Jubilee of the late Queen Elizabeth II. You'll recall that the Honourable Keith Irving at the prior meeting asked for examination of the budget for open houses, in light of the request that members stage an event in relation to our late Majesty's Platinum Jubilee to honour constituents receiving Platinum Jubilee Medals.

Again, I'm going to call on our Chief Clerk to speak to this item, and then we'll have some discussion from there.

JAMES CHARLTON: Thank you, sir. The celebration that members were sort of asked to do, I understand, falls outside the scope of the intended purpose of open houses, but obviously, it's an important event, especially in light of Her Majesty's passing.

So to authorize something, what I would recommend is that rather than raising the expense limit for open houses, which are generally supposed to be small affairs, what the Management Commission could do would be to issue a time-limited directive to authorize each member to claim expenses to stage one or more events on or before February 5, 2023, in relation to her late Majesty's Platinum Jubilee to honour constituents receiving the Platinum Jubilee medal. The date of February 5th is significant because that marks the end of the Jubilee Medal program.

The Management Commission has the authority to issue a directive such as this under Subclause 11(4)(a)(iii) of the House of Assembly Management Commission Act, and Clause 21(1)(m) of the House of Assembly Management Commission Regulations. Really, I think the one question that I would throw back to the commission is, if we were to take this approach, whether we want to specify a limit on how much could be spent on such a celebration.

I think the honourable Mr. Irving suggested \$1,000 as a possible limit last time. I'm not sure if the members would agree with that, or have their own ideas about what sort of limit we might want to place.

THE CHAIR: Is there any further discussion or questions on this recommendation? The floor is open for discussion. Ms. Leblanc.

SUSAN LEBLANC: I just want to clarify because we get confused about this easily - this is not extra money. It is just an ability to use our constituency allowance in this

way. JAMES CHARLTON: Correct.

THE CHAIR: That's my understanding as well.

JAMES CHARLTON: We would treat this as a separate authority from the authority to stage an open house.

THE CHAIR: I guess my question will be: Is it the commission's desire to put a limit on it, or since it's just coming from a constituency budget, it'll be up to the individual MLA? I'm going to put that out there for discussion.

I'm not seeing or hearing any further discussion, so I'm going to put forward that the House of Assembly Management Commission directs under Clause 21(1)(m) of the House of Assembly Management Commission Regulations, that each member may claim expenses to stage one or more events on or before February 5, 2023, in relation to her late Majesty's Platinum Jubilee to honour constituents receiving the Platinum Jubilee Medal.

Do we have a mover for that motion? Mr. Irving. Do we have a seconder? Mr. MacMaster.

All those in favour? Contrary minded? Thank you.

The motion is carried.

Is there any further business to come before the meeting today?

Well friends, the agenda for the House of Assembly Management Commission meeting has been completed. Our meeting stands adjourned. Thank you all.

[The committee adjourned at 3:26 p.m.]