

## HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY MANAGEMENT COMMISSION

### MINUTES

The ninth meeting of the House of Assembly Management Commission was held in Committee Room 1, Dennis Building, on Tuesday, January 24, 2012 at 2:30 p.m.

Present were all of the members of the Commission, namely: Ms Becky Kent, Hon. Frank Corbett, Ms Pam Birdsall, Mr Maurice Smith, Q.C., Hon. Manning MacDonald, Mr Andrew Younger, Hon. Chris d'Entremont, Mr Neil Ferguson (Chief Clerk) and Hon. Gordie Gosse, who acted as Chair. Also present was Annette M. Boucher, Q.C., Assistant Clerk, Gordon D. Hebb, Q.C., Counsel to the Commission, and Deborah Lusby, Director of Administration, Office of the Speaker.

#### 1) Minutes

It was moved by Hon. Chris d'Entremont and seconded by Hon. Frank Corbett that the Minutes of the September 28<sup>th</sup>, 2011 meeting be approved as circulated. **CARRIED.**

#### 2) House of Assembly – Quarterly Financial Update

The quarterly report to the end of the third quarter (December) was circulated to the Commission members in advance of the meeting. Ms Lusby pointed out that overall the expenses were in line with the budgeted authority with 66.6% of the actual authority spent by the end of the third quarter which was 8.4% below the budgeted amount. Ms Lusby pointed out that there was nothing alarming to report to the Commission.

#### 3) Audit Updates

The Chief Clerk reported that there are currently two audit processes underway.

The first is the review and the Internal Controls over Financial Reporting. The intended result is to have an opinion that the internal controls are adequate so the Chief Clerk can be secure in making this certification. The Internal Audit Centre (IAC) led the process on behalf of the Audit Committee in issuing a tender for services. Three candidates were short listed and Ernst and Young (E&Y) was selected by the Audit Committee based on price and experience. E&Y will be reviewing the financial statement accounts, considering materiality and risk, which will include accounts payable processes, capital asset processes, and HR

and payroll processes. Two E&Y auditors and one IAC staff member commenced their review on January 6, 2012 and expect to have a preliminary report on January 27, 2012 with a final report delivered on February 8, 2012.

The second is the audit of the House of Assembly financial statements, which will be done by the Office of the Auditor General. This will be the first time financial statements have been compiled for the House of Assembly. The process is complex as the House of Assembly is really just a collection of cost centres within the provincial government financial umbrella. With the full assistance of Finance, staff were able to produce a set of financial statements for 2010-11. The OAG will audit these financial statements, and will rely on the E&Y internal control review as part of their work. The OAG staff expects to be performing their field work February 6<sup>th</sup> – 24, 2012, the Audit Committee is meeting January 31, 2012 and the OAG will be attending to present their audit plan at that time.

#### **4) House of Assembly Management Commission Annual Report**

Mr Ferguson reminded the Commission members that it is a statutory requirement that the Commission produce an annual report to be tabled in the House of Assembly. The first annual report will not contain the financial information given that the information will only be available once the audit referred to at item 3 above is completed. However, it will contain the Commission's activities and decisions. The financial material, when available, will be tabled separately by the Speaker. A draft report containing the Commission's decisions and activities was circulated in advance of the meeting and a few typographical errors were flagged for correction.

It was moved by Becky Kent and seconded by Pam Birdsall that the Commission's annual report circulated with the typographical corrections noted be tabled by the Speaker in the House of Assembly.  
**CARRIED.**

#### **5) Select Boundaries Committee budget**

Mr Ferguson indicated that the select committee was appointed and had conducted its work between meetings of the Commission. As a result, the budget being presented has already been spent and indeed is accurate. The total budget is \$42, 604.16 and a breakdown was circulated to the Commission members. Mr Ferguson's recollection is that the actual expenditures 10 years ago for the committee were approximately \$39,000 and that the \$42,600 amount at this point in time appears to be a good result in comparison. Mr Ferguson also noted that the committee made attempts to keep their expenses down and the Speaker expressed his appreciation and thanks to the committee for keeping the costs down.

It was moved by Hon. Frank Corbett and seconded by Pam Birdsall that the Select Boundaries Committee budget in the amount of \$42, 064.16 be approved.

**CARRIED**

## **6) Year end deadlines**

Ms Lusby asked Commission members to remind their caucuses that the financial year end is now March 31, and following the financial procedures of the government, there is a grace period until April 15<sup>th</sup> to enter all the expenses incurred to March 31<sup>st</sup>. She pointed out this is a much shorter timeline than that which MLAs are accustomed to and she will send out e-mail reminders as the deadline approaches. However, it was pointed out and discussed that one of the biggest concerns is advertising invoices – MLAs may want to consider paying the last invoice with their credit card to have proof of payment to submit the expense claim within the required time frame. Commission members raised the concern with Transcontinental in particular and the tardiness in accurate billings from the agency. Ms Lusby indicated that she has a good contact person there and she will make contact to see if any co-operation on the March 31<sup>st</sup> billing issue can be obtained for the MLAs. Ms Lusby clarified that if an invoice for services prior to March 31<sup>st</sup> is submitted within 6 months of the actual expense, the invoice will be paid but the amount will applied to the 2012-13 MLA expense budget and not the 2011-12 expense budget. This appears to some Commission members to be unfair and is an issue that will require more discussion at some future point in an attempt to find a resolution to the issue.

## **7) Other**

Mr d'Entremont raised the issue of the security systems for the constituency assistants. He did not want to discuss the matter at this meeting but raised it for continued future discussion. The Speaker indicated that he will seek an up-date from the Sergeant-at-Arms who is looking into this issue, for the next Commission meeting.

Mr d'Entremont also inquired into the possibility of having some postage arrangement with Canada Post for constituency office mail rather than having to obtain a postage meter or purchase rolls of stamps for mailings from their offices which exclude large volume single item mail-outs. Ms Lusby indicated she would look into this and pointed out that there is presently an arrangement in place with the government postal service for mails-outs.

The meeting adjourned at 2:51p.m.

These minutes were approved by the Management Commission on \_\_\_\_\_,  
2011.

**Certified**

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Speaker

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Chief Clerk