

## **HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY MANAGEMENT COMMISSION**

### **MINUTES**

A meeting of the House of Assembly Management Commission was held in the Committee Room, One Government Place, on Tuesday, June 12, 2018 at 1:30 p.m.

Present were: Chair, Hon. Kevin Murphy, Mr Gordon Wilson, Hon. Geoff MacLellan, Hon. Labi Kousoulis, Mr Tim Halman, Hon. Chris d'Entremont, Hon. David Wilson and Mr Neil Ferguson, Chief Clerk.

Also present were Gordon D. Hebb, Q.C., Chief Legislative Counsel, Deborah Lusby, Director of Administration, Office of the Speaker and Annette M. Boucher, Q.C., Assistant Clerk.

#### **1) Minutes of the January 23, 2018 meeting**

It was moved by Hon. Chris d'Entremont and seconded by Hon. Geoff MacLellan that the minutes of the January 23, 2018 meeting be approved as circulated.

**CARRIED**

#### **2) Select Committee to Establish an Electoral Boundaries Commission**

The Chair of the Select Committee, Hon. Geoff MacLellan, put forward a total budget of \$17,000.00 for the committee as follows: \$5,000.00 for fact sheet printing, translation and design; \$8,000.00 for CNS staff/writer; \$4,000.00 for per diems, kilometers, copying, etc.

It was moved by Hon. Geoff MacLellan and seconded by Hon. Chris d'Entremont that the budget as presented be approved.

**CARRIED**

Mr Neil Ferguson, the Chief Clerk, informed the Commission that the budget for the Electoral Boundaries Commission would likely be presented at the next House of Assembly Management Commission meeting. He noted that the Boundaries Commission budget would not be a pressure for the House of Assembly budget as the Treasury Board confirmed that the required funds will be made available to the Boundaries Commission. Because the Electoral Boundaries Commission may commence its work prior to the next House of Assembly Management Commission meeting, a motion for interim expenses is required.

It was moved by Mr Gordon Wilson and seconded by Hon. Geoff MacLellan that the Speaker's Administration Office be authorized to commence reimbursements and expenditures necessary to support the work of the Electoral Boundaries Commission in advance of the next House of Assembly Management Commission meeting at which the Electoral Boundaries Commission's budget will be formally submitted for approval and until then that all Boundaries Commission expenses be submitted by the Speaker's Administration Office to the Treasury Board for payment.

**CARRIED**

### **3) 2017-18 Audit Report**

The Audit Report was circulated in advance of the meeting to the members of the House of Assembly Management Commission. Ms. Lusby noted that the Auditor General issued two unmodified opinions in the report as follows: (a) that the internal controls of the House of Assembly are operating effectively; and (b) that the House of Assembly's expenditures are in compliance with the House of Assembly Management Commission policies and the policies of the Public Service for the year ending March 31, 2018.

It was moved by Hon. David Wilson and seconded by Hon. Labi Kousoulis that the Auditor General's 2017-2018 Audit Report be accepted as presented.

**CARRIED**

### **4) CPI increase effective April 1, 2018**

Pursuant to Section 52 of the *House of Assembly Management Commission Regulations*, the fixed amounts for member expenses may be increased by the lower of the CPI for Nova Scotia or Canada effective April 1 annually. The CPI at April 1, 2018 for NS was 2.8% and for Canada was 2.2%.

It was moved by Hon. Geoff MacLellan and seconded by Mr. Gordon Wilson that there be no increase pursuant to Section 52 of the *House of Assembly Management Commission Regulations* for the 2018-19 fiscal year.

**CARRIED**

Hon Chris d'Entremont indicated that many MLA apartment rental amounts exceed the monthly allowance of \$1,499.00. He requested that staff explore the current rental amounts being paid by MLAs and prepare recommendations as to whether that expense amount should be increased to cover the real cost. Additionally, staff should include the amount of any recommended increase to insure MLAs are not required to pay out of pocket amounts to supplement the rental accommodation amount provided in the Regulations. This would be brought forward at a future meeting for further discussion.

## 5) Barrier free compliance

Ms Lusby noted that all new MLAs submitted forms confirming their constituency office space was barrier free except for Ms Alana Paon – her office parking lot is not paved. Ms Paon requested a waiver for the non-compliance on a technical nature basis. Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal reviewed the matter at Ms Lusby's request and recommended that a waiver for non-compliance be given to Ms Paon by the House of Assembly Management Commission on the basis that the non-compliance was merely technical in nature pursuant to subsection 19A (3) of the *House of Assembly Management Commission Regulations*.

Discussion ensued regarding whether the entire parking lot or an area in front of the constituency office door should be paved with a small paved pathway to the front door of the office. Members of the Commission want to ensure that constituency offices are as accessible as possible. Questions were raised regarding the length of the waiver – Subsection 19A(3) states that a waiver can be granted – in that case there is no time limitation to become compliant as a waiver dispenses with compliance. When the waiver is not granted, then the conditions in the *Regulations* must be followed to become compliant and that includes a compliance plan and possibly paying rent personally.

It was moved by Hon. David Wilson and seconded by Hon. Chris d'Entremont that the House of Assembly Management Commission grant Ms Paon the waiver for barrier free non-compliance of her constituency office with the *Regulations* on the basis that the non-compliance is merely technical in nature and that a letter be sent to Ms Paon asking her to investigate options to pave the parking lot of her constituency office within the next 12 months.

**CARRIED**

## 6) Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 2:10 p.m.

These minutes were approved by the Management Commission on November 13, 2018.

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Speaker

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Chief Clerk