

HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY MANAGEMENT COMMISSION

MINUTES

A meeting of the House of Assembly Management Commission was held in person in the Committee Room of One Government Place on Tuesday, July 5, 2022 at 2:00 p.m.

Present were: Hon. Keith Bain, Chair, Angela Simmonds, John White for the Hon. Kim Masland, Tom Taggart for the Hon. Allan MacMaster, Danielle Barkhouse, Hon. Derek Mombourquette, Hon. Keith Irving, Susan LeBlanc and Assistant Clerk David Hastings for Chief Clerk James Charlton.

Also present were Matthew Timmons, Director of Operations and Administration, Office of the Speaker and Gordon D. Hebb, QC, Chief Legislative Counsel.

The meeting was called to order by the Chair, Mr. Bain.

1) Minutes of January 18, 2022 meeting

It was moved by Mr. Mombourquette and seconded by Ms. Barkhouse that the minutes of the January 18, 2022 meeting be approved as circulated.

CARRIED

2) Analysis of MLA Office Rents

The Chair noted that a resolution passed at the May 4, 2021 meeting required staff to provide an analysis of current MLA office rents and of distances of inside and outside members for the review and consideration of the Management Commission.

Mr. Timmons presented a package of materials that had been circulated ahead of the meeting and explained the four options that had been submitted for consideration.

After some discussion it was moved by Ms. Barkhouse and agreed by the Committee that the matter will be tabled for future consideration and that a recommendation be brought forward at a future meeting.

CARRIED

3) Appointment of the Auditor for 2022-23

This item was presented by Mr. Hastings. As in prior years, the HAMC Audit Committee recommends the Auditor General be appointed as auditor of the of accounts of the House of Assembly for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2023, pursuant to Section 22 of the *House of Assembly Management Commission Act*.

It was moved by Ms. Barkhouse and seconded by Mr. Irving that the Auditor General be appointed as auditor for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2023.

CARRIED

4) House of Assembly Management Commission Regulation Amendments and Revised Form Constituency Office Lease Agreement

This item was presented by Mr. Hebb who explained the proposed amendments to the Regulations regarding constituency office leases.

A motion to approve the *House of Assembly Management Commission Regulations* amendments as presented was moved by Mr. White and seconded by Mr. Mombourquette.

CARRIED

5) Inventory Control Risk Matrix

This item was presented by Mr. Timmons. The Audit Committee by resolution recommended to the House of Assembly Management Commission that the Provincial Inventory Risk Matrix be followed by divisions of the House of Assembly when tagging assets for the purpose of inventory control.

The Matrix was explained by Mr. Timmons. A typo was noted by Mr. White and Mr. Timmons undertook to correct it.

A motion to adopt the Provincial Inventory Control Risk Matrix for use by Assembly offices was moved by Mr. Irving and seconded by Mr. White.

CARRIED

6) CPI Adjustment

This item was presented by Mr. Timmons. Pursuant to subsection 52(1) of the House of Assembly Management Commission Regulations, the fixed amounts set out in the regulations (with limited exceptions) are increased on April 1st of each year by the increase in the Consumer Price Index for Nova Scotia or the core Consumer Price Index for Canada, whichever is lower.

This year, using the CPI for Canada of 6.8 per cent, would see a budget increase of approximately \$297,000 if approved.

After debating the adjustment at length, a motion to not approve a CPI adjustment as set out in the Regulations was moved by Ms. Barkhouse and seconded by Mr. Irving.

CARRIED

7) Quarterly Financials

This item was presented by Mr. Timmons. It was noted that the spent to forecast and the spent to budget numbers were both at 98 per cent which represents a \$500,000 surplus.

It was also noted that 2021-22 was an election year which typically results in a lower than usual surplus because of the volume of turnover of members.

The Chair noted that a motion was not required and thanked Mr. Timmons for his presentation.

8) Other Business

Issues raised by Mr. Irving included concerns regarding inflation and rents for outside members resulting in the need for some members to top up their rent out-of-pocket as well as the issue of the need for independent review of top-up salaries for various positions.

With respect to the latter concern, the Chair advised that he would take it under advisement for further discussion as the current review was tasked to cover MLA base salary and nothing else. In terms of the issue of MLA rent, the Chair committed to have the Speaker, Clerks, Legislative Counsel and Administration meet and report back to the Committee at the next meeting.

Mr. Irving also asked to discuss the allotted budget for community events/open houses (currently at around \$480). It was noted that the maximum budget is insufficient especially during the Queen's Platinum Jubilee Year which MLA's have been asked to recognize.

It was agreed that the administration will look into the issue and return to the Committee with a recommendation.

The meeting adjourned at 2:51 pm

Certified

Chair