

HANSARD

NOVA SCOTIA HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY

COMMITTEE

ON

HUMAN RESOURCES

Tuesday, October 30, 2018

COMMITTEE ROOM

**Appointments to Agencies, Boards and Commissions
&
Agenda Setting**

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STANDING COMMITTEE ON HUMAN RESOURCES

Mr. Ben Jessome (Chairman)
Ms. Suzanne Lohnes-Croft (Vice-Chairman)
Hon. Chuck Porter
Mr. Bill Horne
Ms. Rafah DiCostanzo
Ms. Alana Paon
Mr. Brad Johns
Hon. David Wilson
Ms. Claudia Chender

[Mr. Brendan Maguire replaced Hon. Chuck Porter]
[Mr. Hugh MacKay replaced Ms. Rafah DiCostanzo]
[Ms. Lisa Roberts replaced Ms. Claudia Chender]

In Attendance:

Ms. Judy Kavanagh
Legislative Committee Clerk

Mr. Gordon Hebb
Chief Legislative Counsel



House of Assembly
Nova Scotia

HALIFAX, TUESDAY, OCTOBER 30, 2018

STANDING COMMITTEE ON HUMAN RESOURCES

10:00 A.M.

CHAIRMAN
Mr. Ben Jessome

MR. CHAIRMAN: Good morning, folks. I call this meeting of the Human Resources Committee to order on this Tuesday, October 30th. My name is Ben Jessome, I'll be your Chair for this morning's proceedings.

We will begin with some introductions, beginning at my far right with Ms. Roberts.

[The committee members introduced themselves.]

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you everybody. I remind everybody to keep their phones on silent. I don't think we have any guests here today who haven't been here before anyway, so we know where Granville Street and Parade Square are, in the event of an emergency. Our washrooms are outside, to my left.

Today's committee business is the appointments to agencies, boards and commissions. We have some agenda setting and some other minor things. We will begin with the appointments to ABCs. Do I have any motions from the floor? Mr. Horne.

MR. BILL HORNE: Mr. Chairman, to the Department of Agriculture Weed Control Advisory Committee, I move that Keith Fuller be appointed as an AAFC member, Rick Hoeg as a Department of Agriculture member, and Dr. Scott White as a member for the Dalhousie University Agricultural Campus.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you very much, Mr. Horne. Is there any discussion on that motion?

Would all those in favour of the motion please say Aye. Contrary minded, Nay.

The motion is carried.

Moving to the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development, with Ms. Lohnes-Croft.

MS. SUZANNE LOHNES-CROFT: Mr. Chairman, I so move that Judy Elliot and Ellen Venner-Hiltz be appointed as members to the Board of Directors of the Atlantic Provinces Special Education Authority.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you, Ms. Lohnes-Croft. Is there any discussion on that motion?

Would all those in favour of the motion please say Aye. Contrary minded, Nay.

The motion is carried.

To the Nova Scotia Teachers College Foundation. Do I have a motion from the floor? Ms. Lohnes-Croft.

MS. LOHNES-CROFT: Mr. Chairman, I move that John Grant, Ian Harnish, and Alexander MacDougall be appointed as members to the Nova Scotia Teachers College Foundation.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you kindly. Any discussion on that motion?

Would all those in favour of the motion please say Aye. Contrary minded, Nay.

The motion is carried.

Thank you everybody. To our next item on today's order paper, agenda setting. As per the tradition of this committee, we will move forward accepting three topics from the Liberal caucus, two topics from the Progressive Conservative Party and one topic from the New Democratic Party. Ms. Paon.

MS. ALANA PAON: I would also like to have some discussion today - I'm not sure if it is at this point that I bring it up - with regard to the list of proposed witnesses on the agenda that was sent. We were basically sent a list of proposed witnesses last Monday, and then again on Wednesday. The topics changed after the deadline date, and so I have to ask as to the validity of the new list.

The Department of Justice was taken off of the proposed witness list. It was one of the suggestions under the Liberal caucus and then, unfortunately, it was changed on Wednesday after the deadline date that we were given of October 16th. It was replaced by the Department of Communities, Culture and Heritage. I would have to ask the validity of the new list.

MR. CHAIRMAN: That is a reasonable request, but I would also note that we're only intending to select three topics from the Liberal caucus so we'll make an effort to make we are sure within that week's notice, but for the sake of today's meeting I think we can move forward with three topics.

MS. PAON: What I am asking is basically - I know that we are only choosing three. However, of the four that are listed, the Department of Communities, Culture and Heritage is listed. I'm asking that we speak about the validity of the Department of Communities, Culture and Heritage being on the list in the first place, considering it was added after the deadline, from what I am made aware. Perhaps that's not the case.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Ms. Paon, you want to discuss the validity of the Department of Communities, Culture and Heritage at the committee?

MS. PAON: If I may, I'll try to make this clear with all the dates and the deadlines. Last Wednesday, the clerk of this committee - thank you very much, Ms. Kavanaugh for forwarding the proposed witness list, which from the Liberal caucus included at that time, on Monday when the list was originally sent to us, the Department of Justice on the list, and then it was amended and sent to us yet again at about 2:02 p.m. on Wednesday of last week amended with the Department of Justice being removed and the Department of Communities, Culture and Heritage being put on the list.

We were told, and I was under the assumption, from our last meeting - and it is in our minutes - that you, Mr. Chairman, had told us to submit our proposed topics to Ms. Kavanaugh, our clerk, by Tuesday, October 16th. So I would have to ask, if the topics were submitted by October 16th, why were they then changed after the fact or were they changed after the fact? We were sent one list and then it was changed two days later.

MR. CHAIRMAN: That's fair, and all I can say to that is perhaps it was an oversight on our part. Mr. Johns.

MR. BRAD JOHNS: To follow up on what Ms. Paon is saying, I guess where our concern would be is the fact that when we saw the initial list, we saw the Department of Justice was on that list so we didn't come forward with a request for the Department of Justice. We've put forward our three topics thinking that we would have a discussion in regard to the Department of Justice today.

When it was removed and the Department of Communities, Culture and Heritage was put in its place, if we had prior knowledge and knowing that, we would have submitted that as one of our topics versus - we thought we were going to talk about it because government was bringing it forward. We based our picks on what we saw that the government and the NDP caucus were bringing forward and then tried to fit ours into the slots that we thought were vacant.

So I think we may want some time to reconsider whether or not we want to bring forward the Department of Justice.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Ms. Lohnes-Croft.

MS. LOHNES-CROFT: I understand that having this is a courtesy anyway. It's not determined that there's a set date for bringing our topics forward. It's a courtesy of the committee. Also, we heard the Chair say that you can add that to the topic list today if you choose.

MR. CHAIRMAN: I'm just going to call for a brief recess for a second here guys. We're just going to confer.

[10:10 a.m. The committee recessed.]

[10:12 a.m. The committee reconvened.]

MR. CHAIRMAN: I call this meeting back to order. Just to clarify for the benefit of the members of the committee, the topic as presented is consistent based on the Monday submission to the committee. There was an error in that the proposed topic actually falls under the Department of Communities, Culture and Heritage rather than the Department of Justice.

Ms. Paon.

MS. PAON: To clarify, Mr. Chairman, this was an error that occurred from your caucus office, or was it an error that occurred - I don't want to point anyone out - after the fact?

MR. CHAIRMAN: That's fine. It was an error in that initially . . .

MS. PAON: I want to know where the error occurred.

MR. CHAIRMAN: It was the caucus office. We'll own that. But the topic that is proposed is consistent.

MS. PAON: But it's not consistent, Mr. Chairman, if I may. The topic is not consistent to adhering with the deadline that you yourself set forth for all of the members of this committee at our last meeting.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The topic is consistent.

Mr. Maguire.

MR. BRENDAN MAGUIRE: My understanding is the topic hasn't changed. There was a mistake made on which department that topic fell under. It's exactly the topic that was put forward by the committee that all sides would have seen and been prepared to vote on and discuss. It has not changed. It's just the department. It was a simple mistake that was made. An apology has been put forward. I think we can move on and just discuss the topic.

[10:15 p.m.]

MR. CHAIRMAN: As I said as well, we're only here today to select three topics of the four that are here, so if that's not something that the committee would like to see move ahead, then there are three other topics there that we can move forward on. Ms. Paon.

MS. PAON: So if I may, Mr. Chairman, again and I appreciate that errors do occur, I would like everybody to abide by the same rules that we are given.

When we saw the Department of Justice, those four proposed witnesses are really what we would have discussed as a caucus because usually the topics arrive to us in time to discuss at our regular caucus meetings. We would not have discussed or thought about in advance the Department of Communities, Culture and Heritage so that error would have been made within your own Liberal caucus. It would have been discussed as the Department of Justice moving forward within our caucus.

So we're coming here today basically with a list of topics - the four topics put forward or the proposed witnesses put forward - that wouldn't have been discussed basically at our caucus meeting.

I don't know if we want to strike out and just stay with three with the Liberal caucus or . . .

MR. CHAIRMAN: That's precisely what we're talking about.

MS. PAON: Okay, so do you want to strike out the Department of Justice and the Department of Communities, Culture and Heritage?

MR. CHAIRMAN: Absolutely, that's fine.

MS. PAON: Okay, just so that we adhere to the rules.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Okay, moving along, do I have a motion from the Liberal caucus to submit the topics remaining, please? Ms. Lohnes-Croft.

MS. LOHNES-CROFT: I move that we take the remaining three topics that were proposed and bring them forward as topics for future meetings.

MR. CHAIRMAN: So to be specific.

MS. LOHNES-CROFT: The Department of Immigration, Atlantic Immigration Pilot; the Department of Labour and Advanced Education, the Nova Scotia Apprenticeship Agency, the topic being the New Opportunities for Work program; and the third being Program Manager with the Halifax Partnership Connector Program and the Department of Labour and Advanced Education, the topic being the Connector Program.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you very much. We'll go from one caucus to the next here. Any discussion on that motion?

Would all those in favour of the motion please say Aye. Contrary minded, Nay.

The motion is carried.

Moving to the topics with the Progressive Conservative caucus, Ms. Paon.

MS. PAON: Mr. Chairman, the proposed witnesses that the Progressive Conservative caucus would like to put forward would include: Ms. Carmelle d'Entremont, Vice-President of People and Organizational Development with the Nova Scotia Health Authority, and the proposed topic being recruitment strategies within the NSHA.

The second proposed witness would be Ms. Laura Lee Langley, Commissioner of the Public Service Commission and the proposed topic being succession planning in the Public Service.

Our third proposed witnesses would be the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development with the proposed topic being recruiting childhood educators in the 21st century.

MR. CHAIRMAN: So keeping in mind that we will be approving today, is there any discussion on that motion? Ms. Lohnes-Croft.

MS. LOHNES-CROFT: I don't know if I can make an amendment to that motion but I would propose that we take the first topic, Ms. Carmelle d'Entremont, Vice-President

of People and Organizational Development, Nova Scotia Health Authority, and send it to the new Health Committee. I think it's more appropriate to have that. We're setting up that committee, it has been announced, and I think we should defer that and accept the other two topics.

I don't know if that requires an amendment to the motion.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The request was for two topics, three were actually submitted. I guess I'm trying to be a little flexible here and just carry on without - again, the conversation before the committee right now is around three topics. The Liberals have submitted that recruitment strategies at the NSHA should be deferred to the Health Committee at its earliest convenience

Mr. Johns.

MR. JOHNS: Just for clarification, I'm not aware - probably sleeping somewhere, but what is the composition of caucus members on that committee? Does the member know?

MR. CHAIRMAN: I believe it's consistent with other committees.

Ms. Paon.

MS. PAON: The Progressive Conservative caucus would prefer to have Ms. Carmelle d'Entremont, the Nova Scotia Health Authority, as well as the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development as our two topic items. Recruitment strategies with the NSHA - although that obviously is health related - recruitment strategies are HR related specifically.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The motion is that topics one and three be submitted. There has been an amendment proposed to include recruitment strategies - topic one - at the Health Committee and the amended motion is to accept succession planning in the Public Service and recruiting childhood educators in the 21st century as the two Progressive Conservative caucus topics.

Mr. Wilson.

HON. DAVID WILSON: I appreciate everybody's efforts here, but with all respect, there's no Health Committee yet struck. There is a meeting with the House Leaders coming up in November. In my opinion, that puts that topic right off the table for the rest of the year for sure. I don't foresee the Health Committee up and running before the New Year.

I would agree, yes, the purpose of the Health Committee would hopefully be to deal with health issues, but the topic put forward is an HR issue, so I would support those two going forward.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The amended motion is to defer recruitment strategies to the Health Committee - when it should meet - and include topics two and three.

Mr. Johns.

MR. JOHNS: Respectfully, I guess I'm going to be a little selfish on this one. Of all the ones that are on here - I don't know who our caucus will appoint to the committee, but I am quite curious to hear what NSHA has to say around recruitment. I'm not going to support the amendment because of all of them, that was the one I was kind of interested in seeing what their update was on recruitment, just from a personal perspective, and the opportunity to have a more intimate interaction and discussion around things.

I'm not going to support the motion that's before us. I know that my colleague brought forward a motion that brought all three, but I'd like to see that one be one of the two that our caucus has go forward. I'm not going to support the motion at this time.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The initial motion presented did include topics one and three as an initial motion. There was an initial motion to defer topic one to the Health Committee and accept two and three.

MR. JOHNS: Thank you for the clarification.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Mr. MacKay.

MR. HUGH MACKAY: I would just like to point out that there was all-Party agreement for the formation of the Health Committee so that we could focus health issues at that specific committee without taking up time on other committees. I think that we should move forward on that basis, as we have at other committees, to move health-related issues to the Health Committee. I support the motion made by my colleague, the member for Lunenburg.

MS. PAON: If I may, I would like to ask, how is it that we can move a topic to the Health Committee when the Health Committee does not exist as of yet? Is the motion even valid? There is no Health Committee.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Respectfully, it's on the horizon . . .

MS. PAON: There is no Health Committee, Mr. Chairman, so how can a motion be put forth to move this topic to a Health Committee that does not exist as of yet?

MR. CHAIRMAN: Regardless, the amendment to the motion to accept two of the three proposed PC topics is on the floor.

Would all those in favour of the amendment please say Aye. Contrary minded, Nay.

The motion is carried.

There was an amendment made. Now I have a motion - is there any further discussion on that motion?

MR. JOHNS: I learned a valuable lesson today. Next time we go through these, I'll be advocating that we don't do them based on caucus recommendations but that we move them as a slate. Obviously, we see what happens when we try to do it as a caucus and individual. Next time, I'll certainly be pushing that we do this as a slate of recommendations. That's just a point I wanted to make.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Any further discussion? Would all those in favour of the motion please say Aye. Contrary minded, Nay. (Interruption)

We have to do it again, folks. The amended motion is to accept two and three. The initial motion came from the Progressive Conservatives. The amendment came from the Liberals. Now we have an amended motion to vote on.

MR. MAGUIRE: So what exactly are we voting on?

MR. CHAIRMAN: We're voting on accepting topics two and three from the Progressive Conservative caucus.

Would all those in favour of the motion please say Aye. Contrary minded, Nay.

The motion is carried.

To the NDP caucus, I would ask that the NDP caucus submit one topic, their preferred topic. Ms. Roberts.

MS. LISA ROBERTS: We would like to suggest the topic, women's economic security in Nova Scotia. The witnesses being the Department of Labour and Advanced Education; Dr. Karen Foster from Dalhousie University; and Ms. Angella MacEwan, an economist from CUPE.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Is there any discussion on that motion? Mr. MacKay.

MR. MACKAY: Mr. Chairman, I would like to make a motion to add a witness to the NDP topic, women's economic security in Nova Scotia. Our caucus would like to add Stephanie MacInnis-Langley, executive director at the Nova Scotia Advisory Council on the Status of Women.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Can I consider that a friendly amendment? Wonderful. The motion is to accept topic one with the inclusion of - sorry, Mr. MacKay, can you repeat that please?

MR. MACKAY: I would like to make a motion to add a witness to the NDP topic women's economic security in Nova Scotia. Our caucus would like to add Stephanie MacInnis-Langley, executive director at the Nova Scotia Advisory Council on the Status of Women.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you, Mr. MacKay, for that clarification.

Would all those in favour of the proposed topic please say Aye. Contrary minded, Nay.

The motion is carried.

Just a point of housekeeping, our December meeting actually falls on Christmas, being the last Tuesday of December. (Interruption) Ms. Paon.

MS. PAON: Are we still on our agenda-setting section of committee business?

MR. CHAIRMAN: We just wrapped that up.

MS. PAON: I do have some questions regarding the fact that this meeting was supposed to be actually a very different meeting today. Do I have the floor for a few moments to talk about that?

[10:30 a.m.]

MR. CHAIRMAN: Sorry, talk about what?

MS. PAON: Today's meeting was supposed to be regarding Ms. Dana MacKenzie and Ms. Janice Brown to come forward from the Executive Council Office to speak to us, which we have been speaking about for months, within this space and within this committee, to talk about how people are selected for agencies, boards and commissions. Somehow that meeting scheduled with the Executive Council Office was changed, without any indication as to why it was changed. Why are we not having these witnesses before us today?

MR. CHAIRMAN: As Chair, I felt it was reasonable and consistent with, for example, the proposed training subject at Public Accounts, that we defer that presentation from Executive Council Office to such time when we reconfigure the committee's composition, we would be doing that presentation within probably the next month or so anyhow, it's likely. Generally, any time this committee is reconfigured the Executive Council will come in and submit a presentation to the committee members present, in an effort to give an overview of how that process takes shape.

I made a call to move that down the road, until such time as when the committee was reconfigured.

MS. PAON: Mr. Chairman, may I ask, is there a guarantee then that when the committee is going to be reconfigured - and there's no indication that there's going to be any reconfiguration on the part of the Progressive Conservative caucus, as of this time - I would like to know, what kind of timeline are we looking at after reconfiguration of when the Executive Council Office will be coming in to make that presentation and ask those questions?

MR. CHAIRMAN: We'll endeavour, once the committees are reconfigured, to get Executive Council in here as soon as humanly possible.

Mr. Johns.

MR. JOHNS: I want to thank the Chair for clarification on that. I do recognize that we've talked about at our caucus, with a new Leader coming in, that the government may think there might be some changes. We do recognize that and appreciate that. But similar to Ms. Paon, we just want to make sure that that's coming forward, so hopefully early . . .

MR. CHAIRMAN: In the future I will endeavour to provide a little more information as to - I guess I may have forgone some information that would have been valuable, prior to the meeting, but keeping consistent with some of the practices that have been taking place at other committees, I felt we could save ourselves some time and move that until such a time when the committees would be reconfigured.

Back to our December meeting, I had asked committee members to consider moving our December meeting date, rather than the last Tuesday of December, being the holiday, to move that to December 12th, which would be the second Wednesday in December, at 12:00 noon. If that's friendly with the members of the committee, 12:00 noon. (Interruption)

That's at 2:00 p.m. We still have two hours, from 12:00 noon until 2:00 p.m. on December 12th.

Mr. Johns.

MR. JOHNS: I will defer to Ms. Paon who I think would like to see if it could be moved earlier.

MR. CHAIRMAN: We do have the Public Accounts Committee scheduled for that day, as far as I'm aware, so that's why we put it to that time of day.

MS. PAON: My concern is that we do not at this time have confirmation from our own caucus as to whether or not we will have our caucus meeting on that day. It is a Wednesday and caucus usually takes place on Wednesdays.

MR. CHAIRMAN: I would ask the members of the Progressive Conservative caucus that in the interest of firming up that date, if we're able to - is it not reasonable that you folks can get people here to fill in?

MS. PAON: Caucus is mandatory.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Mr. Maguire.

MR. MAGUIRE: We have caucus on that day, we have the Public Accounts Committee on that day - we're able to get a couple of members here. I just heard the member say that caucus is mandatory. Our caucus is mandatory too. If we have the committee, I'm sure that we'll be able to get members here.

It seems today we're arguing over every little detail of every little thing. Maybe they're still riled up from the weekend, but we're trying to figure out a date and time that works for everybody.

MS. PAON: I'm not riled up over the weekend - I can assure Mr. Maguire that's not the case. What I am asking, however, because caucus is important to attend - is there a reason why we're not just organizing this for the Tuesday before? Does it have to be on Wednesday? Could it not be Tuesday?

MR. CHAIRMAN: Ms. Paon, we did discuss this informally before committee and everything was fine, so I'm not sure what has changed between now and . . .

MS. PAON: I'm just realizing it was a Wednesday.

MR. CHAIRMAN: So you didn't recognize it was a Wednesday. Can we move forward or do we need to put this to a vote?

MR. JOHNS: As I am sure members across from me know, our caucus is in a flux right now. It's kind of hard to be able to say whether or not members from our caucus are going to be able to meet here on that Wednesday.

MR. CHAIRMAN: That's fair. Why don't we shoot for that day today - Ms. Lohnes-Croft, please.

MS. LOHNES-CROFT: What about the Tuesday afternoon beforehand? That will give the people who are away time to travel and be here for Tuesday afternoon.

MR. CHAIRMAN: So Tuesday from 1:42 p.m. (Laughter). Sorry, now the Chair is being smart - I apologize to the members of the committee. So 1:30 p.m. to 3:30 p.m. on Tuesday.

MR. JOHNS: Thank you.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Perfect. (Interruption) Ms. Kavanaugh has just noted that she will make an effort to get a witness for that day as well.

Our annual report - before we take off today, it looks as if we've got some signatures that are required of members of the committee. So before you take off today, let's make sure we get that document signed.

Our next meeting is Tuesday, November 27th from 10:00 a.m. until noon. Our witness will be determined in the not too distant future - as soon as the committee clerk can find a witness to come in.

If there is no further committee business, this meeting is adjourned.

[The committee adjourned at 10:39 a.m.]