

HANSARD

NOVA SCOTIA HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY

COMMITTEE

ON

HUMAN RESOURCES

Tuesday, September 29, 2020

Legislative Chamber

Appointments to Agencies, Boards and Commissions

Printed and Published by Nova Scotia Hansard Reporting Services

HUMAN RESOURCES COMMITTEE

Brendan Maguire, Chair
Suzanne Lohnes-Croft, Vice-Chair
Bill Horne
Rafah DiCostanzo
Brad Johns
Larry Harrison
Kendra Coombes
Claudia Chender

[Hon. Margaret Miller replaced Mr. Brendan Maguire]
[Barbara Adams replaced Larry Harrison]

In Attendance:

Judy Kavanagh
Legislative Committee Clerk

Gordon Hebb
Chief Legislative Counsel



House of Assembly
Nova Scotia

HALIFAX, TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 29, 2020

STANDING COMMITTEE ON HUMAN RESOURCES

10:00 A.M.

CHAIR

Mr. Brendan Maguire

VICE-CHAIR

Ms. Suzanne Lohnes-Croft

THE CHAIR (Suzanne Lohnes-Croft): I call this meeting of the Standing Committee on Human Resources to order. My name is MLA Suzanne Lohnes-Croft and I'm the Vice-Chair, but will be chairing the meeting for today. We will consider appointments to agencies, boards, and commissions.

I ask that members turn off their phones and put them on vibrate and any other people here in the Chamber, as well. In case of emergency, please exit through the back door, walk down the hill to Hollis Street, and gather in the courtyard of the Art Gallery of Nova Scotia.

We have some new procedures in place to protect everyone here today. You'll notice that you're seated farther apart. Please keep your masks on, unless you are speaking. We have provided bottled water instead of our usual coffees and whatnot. I know this is not the best for the environment, but it is for the virus. We want to use the bottles also to protect the new microphones, that's important. We ask that you try not to leave your seat unless very necessary. If you do, you must mask.

We'll ask committee members to introduce themselves starting with the PC caucus.
Ms. Adams.

[The committee members introduced themselves.]

THE CHAIR: We will now begin the committee business with agency, board, and commission appointments. Are there any appointments?

Ms. DiCostanzo.

RAFAH DICOSTANZO: For the Department of Agriculture, I move that the following be appointed to the Nova Scotia Farm Loan Board: Andrew Vermeulen as Vice-Chair and Director, and William Versteeg as Director.

THE CHAIR: Are there any comments? Would all those in favour of the motion please say Aye. Contrary minded, Nay.

The motion is carried.

The Department of Community Services. Mr. Horne.

BILL HORNE: I move that Lisandra Naranjo Hernandez, Lianne Chang, and Roberta Boudreau be appointed as members to the Nova Scotia College of Social Workers Board of Examiners.

THE CHAIR: Are there any comments? Would all those in favour of the motion please say Aye. Contrary minded, Nay.

The motion is carried.

The Department of Health and Wellness. Ms. DiCostanzo.

RAFAH DICOSTANZO: I move that Nicholas Burke, Ann Mann, and Hammad Mohiy un Din be appointed as public representatives to the Board of the College of Medical Imaging and Radiation Therapy Professionals.

THE CHAIR: Are there any comments? Would all those in favour of the motion please say Aye. Contrary minded, Nay.

The motion is carried.

Service Nova Scotia and Internal Services. Mr. Jessome.

BEN JESSOME: Madam Chair, I move that the following be appointed as members to the Film Classification Board: Adeola Adebayo, Michael Baker, Sheila Clark, Joel Furoy, Owen Hansen, Janis Holmes, Darlene MacDonald, Andrew MacLeod, Sheila McDougall, and Lia Rinaldo.

THE CHAIR: Are there any comments? Would all those in favour of the motion please say Aye. Contrary minded, Nay.

The motion is carried.

Ms. DiCostanzo.

RAFAH DICOSTANZO: I move that Nancy McGrath be appointed as a member to the Nova Scotia Real Estate Commission.

THE CHAIR: Are there any comments? Would all those in favour of the motion please say Aye. Contrary minded, Nay.

The motion is carried.

Ms. Coombes.

KENDRA COOMBES: At this time we would like to bring forward a motion, if that's acceptable to the Chair.

THE CHAIR: Yes, go ahead.

KENDRA COOMBES: Thank you. Front-line workers put themselves and their families in harm's way to take care of Nova Scotians during the first wave of the COVID-19 pandemic, and they will do so again should we experience a second wave. The wage top-up was supposed to be a symbol of gratitude to front-line workers, but it excludes too many workers and its rollout has been mired in confusion and miscommunication.

MLAs have recently been told by the Department of Health and Wellness that Northwood received funds to distribute to workers, only to learn a few days later this was not in fact the case. Now, almost five months after the Province announced it would participate in the top-up program, employees at the epicentre of the outbreak in Nova Scotia are still waiting on the department to release the funds.

In July, our caucus asked that this committee be provided with a list of employers and employees who qualify for the top-up, but this was voted down by my colleagues from the Liberal Party. These gaps and delays communicate to workers that their work is not important. Some have described it as a slap in the face. At the very least, they deserve to know when and if they will receive the wage top-up.

I move that the committee write a letter to the Minister of Health and Wellness calling on him to immediately provide a list of employers and positions that received the essential work top-up funds to date and provide timelines for all employers and positions that have not received the top-up that shows which date they will receive the bonus.

THE CHAIR: Any remarks? Mr. Johns.

BRAD JOHNS: The PC caucus would certainly support the motion that's before us. I think it provides clarity in an area where there's a lot of misunderstanding and unclarity, so we certainly support this. I know that workers from various industries across the province would like clarity on this as well, so we'll support this. Thank you.

THE CHAIR: Ms. Adams.

BARBARA ADAMS: I'm very pleased to also support this motion. The circumstances with people working in long-term care and in health care in general is that they're all heroes for going into those buildings - especially in Northwood, given what was happening there each and every day. As someone who actually was working in the nursing homes when this was coming down to the employees, there was an incredible amount of anger and frustration by the employees who found out that they were excluded from this benefit by the pure fact that they might not have had direct contact with residents in those nursing homes.

I agree with writing a letter. I think that we have to be very considerate of the fact that whether or not you had direct patient care, you were still in those facilities working through a pandemic. Each of those employees was deserving of benefits for showing up every day. I'm grateful to the NDP caucus for bringing this forward and will be supporting it.

THE CHAIR: Ms. Chender.

CLAUDIA CHENDER: I just want to take a moment and speak in support of my colleague's motion.

I think, as my colleagues on this side have pointed out, this sort of hero pay or pandemic pay would probably not have been our first choice. I think what happened at Northwood made really clear that, in fact, these folks need better pay all the time, and better benefits, and we need to create a better working situation. In the meantime, what I hear from my constituents is that, aside from calling people heroes publicly, we've done very little to support them.

We were the only province that didn't have child care for essential workers. I know for a couple in my constituency, that was a major challenge. They're both nurses.

As we try to figure out now what we're going to do to make this situation better in the second wave, this is the one thing that we have committed to as a province, so I think that this request is really reasonable. People want to know when they will get this. In many cases, they've been relying on getting this since it was announced.

We all know that hearing you're going to get money and then getting it six months later is really challenging. I think it's an eminently reasonable request to ask for a list and a timeline.

BILL HORNE: I have been investigating and checking this out last week. On Friday, I received a call from the Department of Health and Wellness that indicates that it's imminent that this money will be going out to those who are supposed to be getting it. They have to do the paperwork of finding out how many shifts they've been on and the times. I've been told that it's imminent and will be coming shortly.

BARBARA ADAMS: With all due respect to that, we still don't have a clear identification of all of those who were eligible for this and who weren't. There is really no reason that it has taken this long, specifically because the dates that it was covering are April, May, June and July, which is a long time ago. There is no comfort to those who are calling our offices to hear that it may be coming.

I'm not sure why there would be any hesitancy in writing a letter to ask for those specifics, because I think it would be nice to have it on record - the exact list of those who are eligible. We certainly heard from people who are working in residential care facilities and group homes who wondered why they were not included in this. I think a comprehensive list of everyone who is getting it and when they got it is something that should be transparent so that we can indeed hold those who promised this money accountable.

KENDRA COOMBES: I would like to thank my colleague. I couldn't agree more. In fact, you took the words out of my mouth. I would like to add the fact that these workers have been told it's imminent or it's coming for a very long time.

Also, there have been people who have been left out of this process. That is, again, a very concerning fact, but we've been told lists were coming months ago. We were told that the money was coming months ago. So I think until they actually see the cheque and a date, imminent could be a very long time.

CLAUDIA CHENDER: Recorded vote.

THE CHAIR: We'll ask the clerk to conduct the recorded vote.

YEAS

Ms. Coombes
Ms. Chender
Mr. Johns
Ms. Adams

NAYS

Ms. DiCostanzo
Mr. Jessome
Mr. Horne
Ms. Miller
Ms. Lohnes-Croft

THE CHAIR: The motion is defeated.

Ms. Chender.

[10:15 a.m.]

CLAUDIA CHENDER: I'd like to make a motion for the consideration of the committee.

We have talked about schools before in this environment and the HR needs of schools, which I think is properly considered and discussed at this committee. We understand that the reopening has required a tremendous amount of work from teachers, staff, administrators, parents, and families. We really appreciate all those efforts.

We also understand that, given the uncertainty and unanswered questions about how schools would operate earlier this month, that all hands on deck were needed in those first few weeks. What we were told by the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development was that many non-teaching staff - that includes youth health centre workers, school specialists like speech language pathologists, and autism specialists - were reassigned to help students acclimate to these first hectic few weeks. I think also to help administrators, which makes sense.

Questions around when that reallocation will shift back to normal have gone unanswered. To that end, we are very aware through our constituents and as keen observers of the education system that students need access to the services and supports that these staff members provide. We just did a massive inclusive education process not even a couple of years ago that made that very clear.

In addition, young people need access to sexual health information, learning supports, and assessments. Now more than ever, those youth health centres - in the middle of a pandemic - really need to be open.

I move that the committee write a letter to the Minister of Education and Early Childhood Development calling on him to provide us with the number of non-teaching staff currently reallocated, the titles of their usual positions, an explanation of how these individuals are currently assigned, and the expected date that these staff members will return to their usual positions.

THE CHAIR: Ms. Adams.

BARBARA ADAMS: I appreciate the NDP caucus bringing this forward. One of the things that I'm hearing in my community is that some of the EPAs who had thought that they had permanent jobs in their schools were let go because the number of students that required that additional help was lower than expected. It turns out that a number of students who needed to be assessed for those additional services had not been assessed yet.

One of the things that I haven't heard here - this is my first time at this particular committee - is I'm not aware of exactly how many students have chosen to remain at home. The number of staff and the number of EPAs and others working in the schools - I don't

know how they have been impacted in this province by the fact that there is a certain percentage of Nova Scotian parents who chose to keep their students home from school.

I certainly support this motion. As one of those allied health professionals, it is a complete disservice to those students not to be having those allied health professionals doing the job that they were required to do. The fact that they also need protection from their unions to be doing that job is certainly critical as well. There are too many things up in the air that parents and teachers and allied health care professionals need in terms of job security and to make sure that the right people are doing the right thing at the right place at the right time.

There's no excuse now, given the number of COVID-19 cases in this province, for those allied health professionals to not be doing what they were trained and hired to do. We have way too many students, especially those who need speech language skills and speech therapy and things that are going to impede them from moving forward with their education. This motion should be approved by every member. I can't imagine why there wouldn't be approval to simply ask that question.

I would like the NDP caucus to consider an amendment to the motion to request a summary of what percentage of students in each region are being home schooled just so we have an understanding of how the departments have all reallocated resources. They certainly would have been impacted by those students being taught from home.

THE CHAIR: That was an amendment? Ms. Chender.

CLAUDIA CHENDER: I think that is an important issue, but I would request that it come as a separate motion. I think it's a slightly separate topic, and we would certainly support that motion, but I think it makes sense as a separate motion.

THE CHAIR: Ms. Adams.

BARBARA ADAMS: Following the vote on this motion, I would like to make a motion to write a letter to the Department of Education requesting an outline of the . . .

THE CHAIR: You can do that when you do your motion.

BARBARA ADAMS: I will.

THE CHAIR: There is a motion on the floor by the NDP caucus. Any other comments?

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

Ms. Adams.

BARBARA ADAMS: Given the fact that I know there are staff in my community who got reassigned to other schools and were not expecting it, and given the fact that there are a number of students in my community who are waiting for assessments for extra services, when I speak to the teachers and those in the schools, they tell me that it's all related to the fact that there are a number of students that are not in the schools. I'm also aware that there are a number of students that are out sick at any given time, which also affects staffing levels.

So I'm making a motion that this committee write a letter to the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development asking them to outline the exact numbers of students attending each school in person and those who are being home schooled, and how the staffing structure has changed this year compared to previous years.

THE CHAIR: Ms. DiCostanzo.

RAFAH DICOSTANZO: I'm just wondering if my colleague has asked that question herself. Has she sent a letter to the minister to ask and has not received an answer to her question? Also if these questions can be directed and she will get the answer from the minister. This is a committee for human resources and not for that specific purpose.

THE CHAIR: Ms. Chender.

CLAUDIA CHENDER: I'll forgive the member's ignorance being on the government side, but when we write letters with these questions, we in fact never get answers from the department. It's not that the department isn't responsive - they certainly are responsive and we work very well with the EAs and other folks in the Public Service. The reality, though, is that we don't get the answers to these questions. As well, many of these questions have been asked in lots of public fora, and the response that comes when pressed is often that we could FOIPOP that information.

I would also take issue with the idea that that's not the place of this committee. In fact, this committee is the Human Resources Committee of the Nova Scotia Legislature. We are talking about employees of the Government of Nova Scotia and asking, I think, very reasonable questions about the allocation of those employees and what's happening.

If we did get these answers, if we did have greater transparency, we wouldn't have to ask them here. I can't answer whether my colleague's specific question was put forward in a letter or not, but I can tell you from my experience that when we bring a question forward here, it's because we aren't getting answers in other venues.

It's also not to shame or embarrass anyone - it's literally to get information. The motions that you've seen today are asking questions about things that the government has announced. So the government announced a wage top-up. We haven't seen it after months and months, so we're asking, what's happening with the wage top-up? We saw that staff

got reallocated; that was not announced. People found that out, and we're hearing from specialists, we're hearing from parents who are asking, when is this going to end?

When that question is put to the department, which it has been in several different areas, there is no response. So we are trying to use this committee - which is an opportunity for us to have a formal conversation constituted in our legislative capacities - to get answers to those questions, and I think they're all very simple and reasonable questions.

I continue to be a bit mystified. We're not making policy; we're asking to write a letter. I would think that the members of this committee, the Human Resources Committee, would all want this answer. I don't understand why my Liberal colleagues don't want the answers to these questions in public. I would love if somebody could tell me why they don't want the answers to these questions.

THE CHAIR: Ms. Adams.

BARBARA ADAMS: I appreciate the comments by Ms. Chender because they echo with me. I do get letters eventually sometimes, but it is often weeks down the road when it doesn't make any difference to the people who are calling our offices. We are their voices. The issue that has just come up is that there are staff who are losing their jobs and being reassigned based on the number of students in the school and based on the number of students needing additional resources - yet those students are not getting tested for those resources. The resource of teachers and support staff in a school is the responsibility of this committee, and how many students are in those schools directly impacts that.

I'm simply asking for a number which, frankly, I would have thought the department would have released. We release things like wait times for hip surgeries. I would have thought - given what we've just been through - that the department itself would have released those numbers in the beginning after a couple of weeks when things settled out: this is how many students are being home-schooled, this is how many are in school, and these are the wait times for those students to get tested for additional resources.

Again, I am always mystified why we don't want to be transparent about what is actually happening in our schools, but it directly affects constituencies. The answers are timely and important for those students needing resources because once you've reallocated staff - if it turns out that another 20 students now need additional resources, now you've got to move those staff back again. That's incredibly disruptive to the students, as well as to the teachers and the support staff who are being reallocated from one school to another.

THE CHAIR: Mr. Jessome.

BEN JESSOME: I would just like to state for the record that the allocation of staff and the enrolment figures in our education system are date-stamped every September 30th. These numbers are made public on an annual basis. I think we're kind of debating something that happens anyway at this point in time.

THE CHAIR: Ms. Miller.

HON. MARGARET MILLER: As a former minister in departments, correspondence was certainly something that we always took very seriously. I found that departments are varied because there is a correspondence staff that certainly look after that. There is a huge volume of mail that actually does come into the departments on a daily basis. Usually it goes anywhere from two weeks - and I've seen some correspondence that has been two months, depending on how intricate the responses are, how much detail there is in the responses.

They do cross ministers' desks. The vast majority of times, if possible, they're all responded to as quickly as possible. It all depends on the volume of mail that actually does go into the departments.

Beyond that, I would suggest that this may be a good opportunity to bring up the subject in agenda setting. Any of the Opposition Parties has the authority to do that.

BARBARA ADAMS: I appreciate the volume of mail that everybody gets. We get mail as well. We certainly don't have the same resources that the ministers have though. It is their responsibility to respond to that. I know that the majority of letters that I write don't get responded to, no matter how long it goes. If we do get a response - and as the member has just indicated - it can take months. That's too long for the people who are being impacted.

This is our children we're talking about and their educational needs, after just having been out of school since March. While I appreciate that the numbers may be coming out at the end of September, that's no comfort to these people. It doesn't indicate to us what's going to happen in terms of the allocation of resources for students who need special assistance.

Again, I'd like to call for the motion - being puzzled why writing a letter, which the members say they are happy to respond to, would be something that the government doesn't support.

THE CHAIR: Are we ready for the vote?

There has been a call for a recorded vote.

YEAS

Ms. Coombes
Ms. Chender
Mr. Johns
Ms. Adams

NAYS

Ms. DiCostanzo
Mr. Jessome
Mr. Horne
Ms. Miller
Ms. Lohnes-Croft

JUDY KAVANAGH: Yeas, 4. Nays, 5.

THE CHAIR: The motion is defeated.

Mr. Johns.

[10:30 a.m.]

BRAD JOHNS: At our last meeting of the Human Resources Committee, I raised some concerns in regard to lack of appointments to vacant seats on the Council on African Canadian Education.

After a very long recess when the vote was called, the members from government had chosen at that time to turn that down. A month later, we still do not see any appointments or correspondence in our packages. It's very disheartening and disappointing to me. I question what the commitment of the government is to the African Nova Scotian communities and to education when this was raised last month, and we still have nothing in the papers before us today in our package.

I'd like to move that the committee write a letter to the Minister of Education and Early Childhood Development to ask exactly when we can expect the appointments to be made to this committee. So moved.

THE CHAIR: I think that was in a new article on Thursday locally and in the response, the minister did speak to that.

Mr. Jessome.

BEN JESSOME: I would just reject the notion that there's some sort of appetite or purposeful consideration to disregard the needs of African Nova Scotians in our province. I represent two historic Black communities. It's just fundamentally offensive to hear that.

I will say that as per the words of the minister, these appointments are actively being accepted. They're actively being pursued for completion and appointment. At this time, I don't have a sense of the number, nor is that something that we make public in any appointment process.

The intent is to fill those vacancies as soon as possible to a maximum of 17 members on that board with the assistance of the various organizations that are by way of that group - that committee - asked to appoint or submit recommendations to the minister for approval. We'll not be supporting that motion.

THE CHAIR: Mr. Johns.

BRAD JOHNS: To hear the member across from me say he's not going to support it doesn't surprise me because they didn't support it last time.

What I will say is that I think I have every right to question the commitment of the government when this was raised last month. Here we are a month later, Madam Chair, and there's still nothing in our packages. No correspondence whatsoever.

You would think that if either the Minister of Education and Early Childhood Development or the Minister of African Nova Scotian Affairs felt it was a valid concern, they could have given us correspondence regardless of whether or not the committee chose to do that.

I certainly do question. I think that the public at large, as well as the African Nova Scotian community, are asking and have a right to know when appointments will be made. I don't see the harm in asking for a letter where the government tells us when we can expect appointments to this board.

THE CHAIR: Ms. Chender.

CLAUDIA CHENDER: I'd like to push back on the notion - I understand the member has his constituency and has relationships with his constituents, but the reality is that there has been media coverage of this since Mr. Johns brought it first.

We have heard from Carlotta Weymouth who served on that committee and from Melinda Daye - a former Liberal candidate, I should say - who have said that the reason that these positions are not being filled is because of a decayed relationship with the province.

Whether or not that's true remains to be seen. All we have as members of this committee who approve these appointments are what's in front of us. What we see is that the committee numbers have dwindled over the years and have not been replaced.

Again, we are asking questions and as we can see from today's proceedings, we never get answers. We are expected to sit in our seats as Opposition members and rubber-stamp all of the appointments and be good little MLAs and not ask questions.

[10:30 a.m.]

I understand that there may be lots of reasons that the government doesn't want to answer our questions or that the members opposite don't like our motions or our questions. But, when we bring these issues up, we are bringing them up on behalf of our constituents and we are bringing them up on behalf of Nova Scotians who approach us. I think to imply that it's somehow outrageous we would suggest that is just inappropriate.

It's not us speaking. Mr. Johns raised the issue, but we've heard from several people on that committee, connected to that committee, who have said that this is an issue around the government's attention to this particular constituency.

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

The motion is defeated.

We have some business here about our next meeting date. On October 27th, the Natural Resources and Economic Development Committee will be meeting in the Chamber that afternoon from 1:00 p.m. to 3:00 p.m., and that's one hour after this committee meeting will end if it's on time.

Today we were fortunate because we didn't have a witness in to speak to us today, but this whole Chamber has to be deep cleaned between the meetings, and the closeness of these meetings where we're not using the committee room, it makes it impossible for the deep cleaning.

We are hoping that people will agree to move the Natural Resources Committee to 2 p.m. to 4 p.m. on that date.

JUDY KAVANAGH (Legislative Committee Clerk): It's up to the committee.

THE CHAIR: Mr. Johns.

BRAD JOHNS: For clarification, did you say that the Natural Resources and Economic Development Committee would move to 2:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m.?

THE CHAIR: We have to decide; one has to move. If we can agree, I Chair the Natural Resources and Economic Development Committee, so I'm fine with making that decision here with this group, because in the morning you would have Human Resources and a witness. The cleaning time would have to be following the Human Resources Committee meeting.

Ms. Chender.

CLAUDIA CHENDER: I don't think this committee can change the time, because it's not the same membership. I'm happy to consider whether we could move - I also sit on the Natural Resources and Economic Development Committee so I think we could consider that this afternoon. But I don't think we can agree to that on behalf of our colleagues on a different committee.

THE CHAIR: So we will just remain at the regular time? We agree that we will meet at the regular time. Yes, Ms. Miller.

MARGARET MILLER: Could I suggest that we actually make that change and that we move this committee to 9:00 a.m. and that would still give them the extra hour to prepare for the afternoon without affecting the Natural Resources and Economic Development Committee.

THE CHAIR: Are people in agreement with that? That's fine.

One of the approved witnesses for a meeting is Ms. Kelliann Dean that is coming up, who is the CEO of the Nova Scotia Office of Immigration, and it's difficult for Deputy Dean to attend a meeting on a Tuesday morning because she meets with her forestry transition team. Does the committee agree to hold the November meeting on a Thursday morning - November 26th?

Are we in agreement for that? Mr. Johns.

BRAD JOHNS: I'm just quickly looking. So that would be the 26th of November?

THE CHAIR: Yes.

BRAD JOHNS: I can't speak for everybody else, but I don't have an issue with that.

THE CHAIR: Ms. Chender.

CLAUDIA CHENDER: That's fine with me, but I just want to clarify that if the House is sitting at that time, which there is a good chance it will be, are we still going to proceed with committees in this Chamber? I would hope the answer is yes.

THE CHAIR: Ms. Kavanagh.

JUDY KAVANAGH: I don't have inside information on that. I don't know. Under normal circumstances, this committee meets regardless of whether the House is sitting. If the House is sitting, though we don't have witnesses, you simply meet to consider appointments to ABCs, so it would be a short meeting without witnesses.

CLAUDIA CHENDER: I'd love to just confirm, because when we bring these questions to the Speaker, what he says is that committees are their own creatures - they decide. I'm asking you, as the Chair, can we confirm that this committee will meet - given that there will be at least an hour for deep cleaning of the Chamber - just as there would be between this and another committee meeting?

THE CHAIR: I would affirm what the clerk just said. If the Legislature is sitting, we would not have our witnesses in that day. We would just have commissions and appointments to deal with. That's normally the procedure during House sittings. This meeting our witness would be bumped to another meeting.

BRAD JOHNS: I certainly appreciate the opportunity to be back in the Legislature and be in the room to have our meeting. If by some chance this room or another room wasn't available, I would hope that we would default to what we were previously doing, which would be to continue to conduct the meeting - even if virtually. I think we've been able to do that now for the last four months so hopefully that would be an opportunity, if not in here.

THE CHAIR: I'm not the Chair, but I would think that would definitely be our other resource.

KENDRA COOMBES: Hopefully we are meeting in the Legislature, but would that Thursday then become Tuesday again, if we're not making the exception? It's just a question of clarity.

THE CHAIR: We'll let the clerk work out those details, should that be the issue. She's very efficient, I can tell you, and she keeps me well informed. I think we can depend on her. She will make adjustments as they need, according to the usage of the Legislature.

I think we will adjourn our meeting and we will see you all next month. Some of you I will see in just a couple of hours for the Natural Resources and Economic Development Committee meeting.

This meeting is adjourned.

[The committee adjourned at 10:45 a.m.]