



# Standing Committee on Public Accounts

## ANNUAL REPORT

2012



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Nova Scotia

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Honourable Gordie Gosse  
Speaker  
House of Assembly  
Province House  
Halifax, Nova Scotia

Dear Mr. Speaker:

On behalf of the Standing Committee on Public Accounts, I am pleased to submit the Annual Report of the committee for September 2011 to June 2012 of the Sixty-first General Assembly.

Respectfully submitted,

Keith Colwell, MLA  
(Preston)  
Chair  
Standing Committee on Public Accounts

Halifax, Nova Scotia  
2012





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## **INTRODUCTION**

The Standing Committee on Public Accounts, an all-party committee of the House of Assembly, was struck at the beginning of the First Session of the Sixty-first General Assembly. Pursuant to Rule 60(2)(b) of the *Province of Nova Scotia Rules and Forms of Procedure of the House of Assembly*:

(b) the Public Accounts Committee is established for the purpose of reviewing the public accounts, the annual report or other reports of the Auditor General, and any other financial matters respecting the public funds of the province.

## **MEMBERSHIP**

The membership of the Public Accounts Committee is as follows:

Hon. Keith Colwell, MLA – Chair	Mr. Brian Skabar, MLA
Mr. Howard Epstein, MLA – Vice Chair	Hon. Manning MacDonald, MLA
Mr. Clarrie MacKinnon, MLA	Mr. Chuck Porter, MLA
Mr. Gary Ramey, MLA	Mr. Allan MacMaster, MLA
Mr. Mat Whynott, MLA	

## **MEMBERSHIP CHANGES**

On January 30, 2012, the committee underwent the following membership changes: Hon. Keith Colwell, MLA, (Preston) replaced Ms. Diana Whalen, MLA, (Halifax Clayton Park) as Chair; Mr. Andrew Younger, MLA, (Dartmouth East) became member. On March 27, 2012, Hon. Manning MacDonald, MLA, (Cape Breton South) replaced Mr. Andrew Younger, MLA, (Dartmouth East) as member. On October 2012 Mr. Andrew Younger, MLA (Dartmouth East) replaced Hon. Manning MacDonald, MLA (Cape Breton South) as member.

## PROCEDURES AND OPERATIONS

The Public Accounts Committee traditionally meets on Wednesday morning in either the Legislative Chamber in Province House or in the Legislative Committees Office. During the third and fourth sessions of the Sixty-first General Assembly, the committee met on the following dates:

September 28, 2011	February 22, 2012
October 12, 2011	February 29, 2012
October 19, 2011	March 7, 2012
October 26, 2011	March 28, 2012
November 2, 2011	April 4, 2012
November 9, 2011	April 11, 2012
November 16, 2011	April 18, 2012
November 23, 2011	April 25, 2012
November 30, 2011	May 2, 2012
December 14, 2011	May 9, 2012
January 11, 2012	May 16, 2012
January 18, 2012	May 23, 2012
February 8, 2012	May 30, 2012
February 15, 2012	June 6, 2012

## NOTICES

Notices of the Public Accounts Committee meetings are sent to all members of the committee, staff of the caucus offices, Legislative staff and the House of Assembly Press Gallery. The notices are also posted in Province House and are on the committees' website at the following address: <http://nslegislature.ca/index.php/committees/>.

## TRANSCRIPTS

Transcripts of all Public Accounts Committee public hearings are available from the Legislative Library in Province House, the Legislative Committees Office or on the Public Accounts Committee's website at the following address:  
[http://nslegislature.ca/index.php/committees/committee\\_hansard/C7/](http://nslegislature.ca/index.php/committees/committee_hansard/C7/).

All live coverage and re-broadcasts of the Public Accounts Committee are available on EastLink Cable channel 95. Live webcasts are co-produced by Legislative Television and Communications Nova Scotia. Video archives and podcasts are available at:  
<http://nslegislature.ca/index.php/proceedings/legislative-tv>.

## **ANNUAL REPORTS**

All reports of the Public Accounts Committee are compiled and written by the committee clerk. The draft is then sent to committee members for consideration. Upon completion of the review and approval of the report, the Chair tables the report with the Speaker of the House of Assembly or with the Clerk of the House of Assembly.

Distribution of the report is as follows: to the Speaker and to the Clerk of the House of Assembly, all members of the committee, all witnesses who appeared before the committee, the Legislative Library in Nova Scotia, and the caucus offices. The report is also available to the general public upon request through the Legislative Committees Office, or on the Committees' website at the following address:

[http://nslegislature.ca/index.php/committees/standing\\_committees/public\\_accounts](http://nslegislature.ca/index.php/committees/standing_committees/public_accounts).

## **RESEARCH MATERIAL**

All research for the Public Accounts Committee is coordinated between the committee clerk and the researcher at the Legislative Library. Research material is compiled in an electronic format and is distributed one week prior to the meeting to members, staff and witnesses.

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

The Standing Committee on Public Accounts wishes to extend its gratitude: to the witnesses for their time and co-operation; the staff of the Legislative Committees Office; Mr. Robert Kinsman, Editor of Hansard Reporting Services, and staff; Mr. James MacInnes, Coordinator/Director of Legislative Television and Broadcast Services, and staff; Ms. Margaret Murphy, Legislative Librarian, and staff, and to Ms. Heather Ludlow, Information Services Librarian.



## **WITNESSES**

September 28, 2011	<b>Subcommittee on Agenda and Procedures</b> Setting the Agenda <i>In camera</i>
October 12, 2011	<b>Chief Information Office</b> Government Telecommunication Expenses
October 19, 2011	<b>Department of Labour and Advanced Education</b> Occupational Health and Safety Administrative Penalties
October 26, 2011	<b>Department of Health and Wellness</b> Colchester Regional Hospital Replacement
November 2, 2011	<b>Department of Community Services</b> Early Childhood Development Services - Daycares
November 9, 2011	<b>Subcommittee on Agenda and Procedures</b> Setting the Agenda <i>In camera</i>
November 16, 2011	<b>Office of the Auditor General</b> November 2011 Report <i>In camera</i>
November 23, 2011	<b>Office of the Auditor General</b> November 2011 Report Public
November 30, 2011	<b>Department of Education</b> Formula Grants to School Boards
December 14, 2011	<b>Department of Health and Wellness</b> Diabetes Care and Nova Scotia Renal Programs
January 11, 2012	<b>Department of Labour and Advanced Education</b> Office of the Fire Marshal
January 11, 2012	<b>Subcommittee on Agenda and Procedures</b> Setting the Agenda <i>In camera</i>
January 18, 2012	<b>Office of the Auditor General</b> January 2012 Report

February 8, 2012	<b>Department of Finance</b> Review of the Public Accounts of the Province 2010 – 2011 <i>In Camera Briefing</i>
February 15, 2012	<b>Department of Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal</b> RIM Budget Financing, Chip Seal and Asphalt Plans
February 15, 2012	<b>Subcommittee on Agenda and Procedures</b> Setting the Agenda <i>In Camera</i>
February 22, 2012	<b>Department of Labour and Advanced Education</b> Nova Scotia Office of Immigration
February 29, 2012	<b>Department of Finance</b> January 2012 Report of the Auditor General
March 7, 2012	<b>Department of Service Nova Scotia &amp; Municipal Relations</b> Registry of Motor Vehicles
March 7, 2012	<b>Subcommittee on Agenda and Procedures</b> Setting the Agenda <i>In camera</i>
March 28, 2012	<b>Department of Agriculture</b> Meat Inspection Program
April 4, 2012	<b>Department of Health and Wellness</b> Better Care Sooner
April 11, 2012	<b>Efficiency Nova Scotia Corporation</b> Efficiency Programs and Demand-side Management Fees
April 11, 2012	<b>Subcommittee on Agenda and Procedures</b> Setting the Agenda <i>In camera</i>
April 18, 2012	<b>Chief Information Office</b> Disaster Preparedness – Major Government Information Systems
April 25, 2012	<b>Subcommittee on Agenda and Procedures</b> Setting the Agenda <i>In camera</i>



May 2, 2012	<b>Nova Scotia Utility and Review Board</b> Energy Issues and Power Rates
May 9, 2012	<b>Communications Nova Scotia</b> Government Advertising
May 16, 2012	<b>Department of Service Nova Scotia and Municipal Relations</b> Heating Assistance Rebate Program
May 23, 2012	<b>Capital District Health Authority</b> Nursing Staff Overtime Costs
May 30, 2012	<b>Office of the Auditor General</b> May 2012 Report <i>In camera</i>
June 6, 2012	<b>Office of the Auditor General</b> May 2012 Report Public



# PUBLIC HEARINGS



WITNESSES

Chief Information Office

Holly Fancy – Chief Information Officer and Assistant Deputy Minister

Blaine Maxwell – Director of Service Management

Darrin MacKeigan – Senior Project Analyst

MATTERS OF DISCUSSION

The focus of the meeting was government telecommunication expenses including information technology, local, voice, long distance and cellular phone services, paging and data networks.

The Chief Information Office was created in 2009 to plan, organize and direct the efficient and effective use of technology and information across government.

The Auditor General's April 2009 Report on IT Security and Government-wide Technology noted significant deficiencies in IT security planning, monitoring and policy enforcement as well as the need for improved policies and standards. In response, CIO has established a Risk Management committee to examine the risks as they relate to IT security. They continue to refine security standards, i.e. monitoring for compliance, intrusion and detection.

REQUEST FOR DOCUMENTATION

The committee requested and received the following information:

- A document providing a breakdown of the Auditor General's recommendations as referenced in the Chief Information Office Accountability Report
- The date as to when the Nova Scotia Government purchased Microsoft software

## COMMITTEE BUSINESS

The committee has approved the record of decision from the Subcommittee on Agenda and Procedures.

Chief Information Office

Re: Government Telecommunications Expenses

Department of Education

Re: Formula Grants to School Boards

Department of Community Services

Re: Early Childhood Development Services concerning Daycares in Nova Scotia

Department of Labour and Advanced Education

Re: Administrative Penalties for Occupational Health and Safety

Department of Finance

Re: Taxation and Fiscal Policy

Department of Health and Wellness

Re: Colchester Regional Hospital Replacement (May 2011 Auditor General Report)

## TRANSCRIPT

The transcript for the meeting can be found at:

[http://nslegislature.ca/index.php/committees/committee\\_hansard/C7/pa\\_2011oct12](http://nslegislature.ca/index.php/committees/committee_hansard/C7/pa_2011oct12)

**OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH AND SAFETY  
ADMINISTRATIVE PENALTIES**

October 19, 2011

WITNESSES

Department of Labour and Advanced Education

Jeff Conrad – Associate Deputy Minister

Jim LeBlanc – Director of Occupational Health and Safety

Laurie Bennett – Manager of Financial Services

Vince Garnier – Director of Investigations, Technical and Internal Services

MATTERS OF DISCUSSION

The focus of the meeting was administrative penalties to organizations under the occupational health and safety legislation.

Administrative Penalties is an initiative that was designed to support efforts to make Nova Scotia's workplaces safer and healthier by imposing fines to enforce the existing legislation.

This regulation came into being in September of 2009 to address problems with organizational response to orders and low employee participation rates. Organizations were given a four-month learning period regarding the administrative penalties before they came into effect in January 2010.

REQUESTS FOR DOCUMENTATION

The committee requested and received the following documentation:

- A regional breakdown of administrative penalties by sector
- Clarification on whether or not inspection efforts are guided by the number of Workers' Compensation claims

TRANSCRIPT

The transcript for the meeting can be found at:

[http://nslegislature.ca/index.php/committees/committee\\_hansard/C7/pa2011oct19](http://nslegislature.ca/index.php/committees/committee_hansard/C7/pa2011oct19)





WITNESSES

Department of Health and Wellness

Kevin McNamara – Deputy Minister

Bryan Darrell – Director, Infrastructure Management

Linda Penny - Chief Financial Officer

MATTERS OF DISCUSSION

The focus of the meeting was the Colchester Regional Hospital Replacement audit as reported in the May 2011 Report of the Auditor General.

The building of a replacement for the Colchester Regional Hospital was approved in 2005 with an initial budget of \$104 million. Inflation costs and other factors were not considered over the life of the project.

The project was approved in principle in 2003. At that time, the Colchester-East Hants Health Authority received approval to spend \$1 million to complete the master program, functional program and site selection process. In September 2005, an Order-in-Council was issued in the amount of \$78 million which represented the department's share. Colchester's share was \$26 million for a total of \$104 million project cost. Since 2005 the project has received additional monies through OICs.

The department has implemented or is working on all 14 recommendations in the Auditor General Report.

## REQUESTS FOR DOCUMENTATION

The committee requested and received the following information:

- Who was accountable, now or in the past, for this project
- Were any bonuses were paid to senior members of government during the project
- The amount of the bid from the company that did not get the tender on this project
- The names of the firms who replied to the tender for the mechanical and electrical trade components
- Is there any recourse from Hanscomb for the low estimate on the project that they provided to the province
- A listing of the projects that are being worked on currently
- The reason for the Order-in-Council requesting an additional \$51 million increase in August 2007
- A copy of the report that was presented by the consultants to the Colchester-East Hants District Health Authority
- The cost of the “Better Health Care Sooner” commercial ads
- Details as to why the space requirement was more than Cabinet approved
- Information on whether or not staff at the department were involved in changing the estimates that would have gone to Cabinet

## TRANSCRIPT

The transcript for the meeting can be found at:

[http://nslegislature.ca/index.php/committees/committee\\_hansard/C7/pa2011oct26](http://nslegislature.ca/index.php/committees/committee_hansard/C7/pa2011oct26)

**EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT  
SERVICES – DAYCARES**

November 2, 2011

WITNESSES

Department of Community Services

Robert Wood – Deputy Minister

Dave Ryan – Associate Deputy Minister

George Savoury – Executive Director, Family & Community Supports/Child & Youth  
Strategy

George Hudson – Executive Director, Finance & Administration

Virginia O’Connell – Director, Early Childhood Development Services

Martha Gillis – Director, Licensing Services

MATTERS OF DISCUSSION

The focus of the meeting was to discuss early childhood development services with regard to daycares in Nova Scotia.

Implemented in 2005, the Early Learning and Child Care Plan has enabled the Department of Community Services to invest more than \$154 million in child care. Parents have more options in choosing child care since child care subsidies were made portable and now stay with the child rather than the facility. The family home care program, which gives parents the option of having their children cared for in a home environment, has been expanded.

The department works in conjunction with the Department of Health and Wellness to create the standards for regulated food and nutrition in child care settings.

The department has also implemented the Early Childhood Enhancement Grant for child care providers, for the provision of staff salaries, benefits and professional growth for child care educators, and for general operating expenses.

TRANSCRIPT

The transcript for the meeting can be found at:

[http://nslegislature.ca/index.php/committees/committee\\_hansard/C7/pa2011nov2](http://nslegislature.ca/index.php/committees/committee_hansard/C7/pa2011nov2)



**NOVEMBER 2011 REPORT OF THE AUDITOR GENERAL**

*In Camera*

November 16, 2011

WITNESSES

Office of the Auditor General

Jacques Lapointe – Auditor General

Alan Horgan – Deputy Auditor General

Terry Spicer – Assistant Auditor General

Evangeline Colman-Sadd – Assistant Auditor General

MATTERS OF DISCUSSION

The focus of the meeting was to review the Auditor General's November 2011 Report.

This was an *in camera* briefing session afforded to members of the Standing Committee on Public Accounts to review the report privately prior to its public release.

It was at this meeting that the rules of embargo relating to the release of the Report of the Auditor General were enforced. This new process was developed to allow an efficient release of the report when the House of Assembly is in session, while protecting the privilege of the members.

COMMITTEE BUSINESS

The Standing Committee on Public Accounts approved the record of decision from the Subcommittee on Agenda and Procedures.

Office of the Fire Marshal

Re: May 2011 Report of the Auditor General

Report of the Auditor General

Re: January 2012 Report

Department of Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal

Re: RIM Budget and Asphalt and Chip Sealing Plans

Office of Immigration

Re: Immigration Strategy

TRANSCRIPT

This meeting was in camera. No public transcript is available.



## WITNESSES

### Office of the Auditor General

Jacques Lapointe – Auditor General

Alan Horgan – Deputy Auditor General

Terry Spicer – Assistant Auditor General

Evangeline Colman-Sadd – Assistant Auditor General

## MATTERS OF DISCUSSION

Each of the auditors presented an overview of the report sections for which they were responsible.

The chapters discussed were:

Chief Information Office – Disaster Preparedness, Major Government Information Systems;

Department of Agriculture – Meat Inspection Program;

Departments of Community Services and Health and Wellness – Protection of Persons in Care;

Department of Energy – Canada-Nova Scotia Offshore Petroleum Board;

Department of Justice – Implementation of the Nunn Commission of Inquiry Recommendations

## TRANSCRIPT

The transcript for the meeting can be found at:

[http://nslegislature.ca/index.php/committees/committee\\_hansard/C7/pa2011nov23](http://nslegislature.ca/index.php/committees/committee_hansard/C7/pa2011nov23)





WITNESSES

Department of Education

Rosalind Penfound – Deputy Minister

Frank Dunn – Chief Operating Officer – Corporate Services Branch

Doug Stewart – Senior Project Executive

Allan Lowe – Senior Executive Director, Public Schools Branch

MATTERS OF DISCUSSION

The focus of the meeting was to discuss formula grants to school boards.

Currently there are fewer than 125,000 students in the system. This is almost 30,000 less than was recorded 10 years ago. The teacher-to-student ratio is 1 to 12.9. According to the Levin Report, the department should focus on five areas: reducing failure in the system, improving daily teaching practices, making better use of facilities, expanding learning outside formal school offerings, and building public support for public education.

The boards looked for savings in administration first in order to protect the classrooms. The school boards requested a review of the Hogg formula, last revised in 2000, to ensure that it accurately reflects the costs of the programs and services, and that it accurately reflects the number of students. No decisions have yet been made on a new funding formula

TRANSCRIPT

The transcript from the meeting can be found at:

[http://nslegislature.ca/index.php/committees/committee\\_hansard/C7/pa20111130](http://nslegislature.ca/index.php/committees/committee_hansard/C7/pa20111130)



**DIABETES CARE PROGRAM AND  
THE NOVA SCOTIA RENAL PROGRAM**

December 14, 2011

WITNESSES

Department of Health and Wellness

Kevin McNamara – Deputy Minister

Katherine Fraser – Director, Acute and Tertiary Care

Linda Penny – Chief Financial Officer

MATTERS OF DISCUSSION

The Diabetes Care Program and the Renal Program advise the Department of Health and Wellness in developing or adopting clinical service standards to improve clinical care. They also advise on service delivery models and the impact of new technologies on patient care. Both work with the goal of providing better health care to individuals with kidney disease and/or diabetes by working with service providers in all District Health Authorities.

The Diabetes Care program helps to ensure that health care workers provide the quality of care that meets national and provincial guidelines. Currently, there are 39 diabetes care centres across the province. Although there is a good network in place there needs to be more training.

The Renal Program has standardized laboratory reporting and implemented a quality monitoring system in all labs throughout the province. The program has developed guidelines and educational modules to provide primary health care providers with the education and tools required to manage individuals at risk of developing kidney disease.

REQUESTS FOR DOCUMENTATION

The committee requested and received the following documentation:

- Copies of the agreements with schools regarding guidelines for supporting students with Type 1 diabetes
- The percentage of individuals across the province who travel more than the one-hour time limit for medical treatment
- Information regarding the income tax deduction for individuals who travel over 70 kilometres for medical treatment
- Copies of the pamphlets on Home Care Dialysis

TRANSCRIPT

The transcript for the meeting can be found at:

[http://nslegislature.ca/index.php/committees/committee\\_hansard/C7/pa2011dec14](http://nslegislature.ca/index.php/committees/committee_hansard/C7/pa2011dec14)



WITNESSES

Department of Labour and Advanced Education (LAE)

Office of the Fire Marshal (OFM)

Jeff Conrad – Associate Deputy Minister (LAE)

Harold Pothier – Acting Fire Marshal (OFM)

Ann Partridge – Senior Project Director (OFM)

Laurie Bennett – Manager, Financial Services (LAE)

MATTERS OF DISCUSSION

The focus of the meeting was to discuss the May 2011 audit of the Office of the Fire Marshal as reported by the Office of the Auditor General.

The Office of the Fire Marshal establishes and enforces standards for fire safety in buildings and for the safe storage of flammable and combustible materials. It also advises various levels of government on fire-related matters including issues of fire protection.

The OFM conducts building inspections and audits inspections conducted by others as these relate to fire safety issues. They also support the activities of municipal fire inspectors.

The report of the Auditor General made 25 recommendations related to deficiencies and highlighted similar recommendations made in previous reports that had not yet been followed up on.

The department stated that it has put together an action plan that addresses these issues and recommendations, and placed timelines on their actions to ensure that the right systems and processes are in place to enable positive change.

Some of the audit recommendations are longer term so the department has put in place a staggered implementation process.

The department is working with municipalities to define an appropriate system of inspection.

To date, the Office of the Fire Marshal has inspected 50 per cent of the elementary schools and hospitals and is on target to finish by the end of March.

## REQUESTS FOR DOCUMENTATION

The committee requested and received the following documentation:

- A list of the buildings that the Office of the Fire Marshal ordered to be vacated in the past year

## TRANSCRIPT:

The transcript for the meeting can be found at:

[http://nslegislature.ca/index.php/committees/committee\\_hansard/C7/pa2012jan11](http://nslegislature.ca/index.php/committees/committee_hansard/C7/pa2012jan11)

**JANUARY 2012 REPORT OF THE  
AUDITOR GENERAL**

January 18, 2012

WITNESSES

Office of the Auditor General

Jacques Lapointe – Auditor General

Alan Horgan – Deputy Auditor General

Ann McDonald – Assistant Auditor General

Shelley Creighton – Audit Principal

MATTERS OF DISCUSSION

This meeting was held in two parts beginning with an *in camera* briefing session followed by a public session.

The *in camera* briefing session is afforded to the members of the Standing Committee on Public Accounts to review the report privately prior to the public session, and the public release of the report.

This was a new type of specialized report from the Auditor General outlined that consolidated all the financial audit work from the past year. The report incorporates results of financial audits and reviews; governance and control frameworks; indicators of financial conditions; reviews of external audit opinions and management letters; and a follow-up on their financial recommendations since 2005.

Concerns were expressed that portions of the report strayed into general economics and public policy, which may go beyond the Auditor General's mandate.

COMMITTEE BUSINESS

The Standing Committee on Public Accounts approved the record of decision from the Subcommittee on Agenda and Procedures.

Department of Finance

Re: Public Accounts of the Province 2010 – 2011

Department of Finance

Re: January 2012 Report of the Auditor General

TRANSCRIPT

The transcript for the meeting can be found at:

[http://nslegislature.ca/index.php/committees/committee\\_hansard/C7/pa2012jan18](http://nslegislature.ca/index.php/committees/committee_hansard/C7/pa2012jan18)





**REVIEW OF THE PUBLIC ACCOUNTS OF  
THE PROVINCE 2010 - 2011**

*In camera*

February 8, 2012

WITNESSES

Department of Finance

Byron Rafuse – Controller, Associate Deputy Minister

Suzanne Wile – Executive Director, Government Accounting

Robert Bourgeois – Director, Financial Accounting

MATTERS OF DISCUSSION

The focus of the meeting was to have an overview session on the Public Accounts of the province for 2010 – 2011. Various sections of the public accounts volumes and their functions were explained.

Committee members were instructed on why the books are presented as they are and the difference between what is and what is not consolidated.

REQUESTS FOR DOCUMENTATION

The committee requested and received the following information:

- An outline of the different branches of the Department of Finance and their responsibilities
- Documentation showing the variations of Nova Scotia's bond rating
- A breakdown of the items under "Other Provincial Sources" with regard to royalties for other traditional kinds of natural resources

COMMITTEE BUSINESS

The Subcommittee on Agenda and Procedures that was to meet immediately following this meeting was cancelled and rescheduled for February 15, 2012. The standing committee underwent the following membership changes: Hon. Keith Colwell, MLA, became the Chair of the Standing Committee on Public Accounts. Ms. Diana Whalen, MLA, was replaced as member by Mr. Andrew Younger, MLA, (Dartmouth East).

TRANSCRIPT

This meeting was *in camera*. No public transcript is available.



**RIM BUDGET FINANCING / CHIP SEAL  
AND ASPHALT PLANS**

February 15, 2012

WITNESSES

Department of Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal

Jane Fraser – Acting Deputy Minister

Bruce Fitzner – Chief Engineer, Highway Programs

Brent Pero – Acting Executive Director, Finance

MATTERS OF DISCUSSION

The focus of the meeting was to discuss Rural Impact Mitigation (RIM) and the chip sealing and asphalt paving plans of the province.

The RIM program, introduced in 2000-2001, is for the maintenance of provincial rural and secondary roads. The chip-seal operation and the asphalt plant, which are new programs, help to ensure safe roads.

TABLED DOCUMENTATION

The following documentation was tabled by the Hon. Chris d'Entremont, MLA:

- FOIPOP information with regard to the cost of chip-sealing the Monte Vista Road, salaries and expenses of the crews, the cost of the consultant for the Monte Vista Road, amortization of TIR equipment and other related information
- Email transmissions with regard to Monte Vista Road

The following documentation was tabled by Mr. Andrew Younger, MLA:

- A table showing the 2010 – 2011 & 2011 – 2012 RIM funding

## REQUEST FOR DOCUMENTATION:

The committee requested and received the following documentation:

- Details on salaries, expenses, benefits, the number of employees, etc, involved in the chip seal work
- A copy of the consultant's standing offer and the cost of the consultant;
- Response on the accuracy of the numbers within the tabled 2010 – 2011 RIM funding chart
- Detailed costs on preparation work needed for the chip-seal plant, including all the labour and materials
- A copy of the criteria used to identify which roads would be paved
- Responses to the remaining questions tabled by Hon. d'Entremont, MLA

## TRANSCRIPT

The transcript for the meeting can be found at:

[http://nslegislature.ca/index.php/committees/committee\\_hansard/C7/pa2012feb15](http://nslegislature.ca/index.php/committees/committee_hansard/C7/pa2012feb15)

## WITNESSES

### Department of Labour and Advanced Education

Sandra McKenzie – Deputy Minister

Elizabeth Mills – Executive Director, Office of Immigration

Frank Dunn – Associate Deputy Minister of Education

Diane Gordon – Manager – RPL and Labour Mobility with Adult Education

## MATTERS OF DISCUSSION

The focus of the meeting was to obtain an overview of the immigration strategy and to provide updates on immigration plans, retention rates, expenditures and other immigration issues.

The goal of the “Welcome Home to Nova Scotia” immigration strategy is to increase immigration, welcoming 7,200 immigrants by 2020, and to increase the retention rate to 70 per cent. This strategy complements the workforce strategy and jobsHere by targeting international workers and international contacts.

Immigration is a shared federal-provincial jurisdiction, with the government of Canada being solely responsible to grant permission for any foreign national to enter Canada. Nova Scotia has an agreement with Citizenship and Immigration Canada that allows the nomination of foreign nationals who meet provincial labour market needs. Provincial nominee programs are a substream of the federal economic class, therefore the Government of Canada makes the final decision on all applicants.

## REQUESTS FOR DOCUMENTATION

The committee requested and received the following documentation:

- A copy of the new federal-provincial temporary foreign worker agreement
- A copy of any comments by the government of Nova Scotia on Canada’s immigration plan since the inception of the Canada-Nova Scotia Co-operation Agreement on Immigration in 2008

## COMMITTEE BUSINESS

The Standing Committee approved the record of decision from the Subcommittee on Agenda and Procedures.

Department of Service Nova Scotia and Municipal Relations  
Re: Registry of Motor Vehicles and Registry of Motor Vehicles Information and Technology  
(May 2011 Report of the Auditor General)

Department of Agriculture – Food Inspection Division  
Re: Meat Inspection Program (November 2011 Report of the Auditor General)

Department of Health and Wellness  
Re: Overtime Costs for Nursing Staff at Capital Health

Department of Health and Wellness  
Re: Communicable Disease Prevention and Control

Department of Health and Wellness  
Re: Prescription Monitoring Board

A request was received from the Office of the Auditor General asking that prescription monitoring board and communicable disease prevention and control not go forward at this time as they are in the process of being audited.

The Standing Committee on Public Accounts agreed to the request. The remainder of the record of decision list was agreed upon to go forward.

## TRANSCRIPT

The transcript for the meeting can be found at:  
[http://nslegislature.ca/index.php/committees/committee\\_hansard/C7/pa2012feb22](http://nslegislature.ca/index.php/committees/committee_hansard/C7/pa2012feb22)

WITNESSES

Department of Finance

Margaret MacDonald – Deputy Minister

Byron Rafuse – Associate Deputy Minister

MATTERS OF DISCUSSION

The focus of the meeting was to respond to the January 2012 Auditor General’s Report.

The Department of Finance works closely with the Auditor General’s Office in many areas. They are also the host department for the Internal Audit Centre which is a service provided to all of government.

The witnesses noted that the report contained many positive comments as well as areas for improvement. The department recognizes that they have not implemented all of the recommendations.

The department will continue to work with the Auditor General to improve budget and reporting processes.

TABLED DOCUMENTATION

The following documentation was tabled by Mr. Mat Whynott, MLA:

- A copy of the NSBI Procurement Policy

The following documentation was tabled by Mr. Andrew Younger, MLA:

- News article entitled “AG defends report questioning ethics of debt”
- Section of the Auditor General’s Act
- Section of the Deloitte & Touche LLP Report “Province of Nova Scotia Financial Review – Phase 2 Report”

## MOTIONS

At the beginning of the meeting, Hon. Chris d'Entremont, MLA, raised the issue of government spending hundreds of thousands of dollars in untendered contracts on the Ships Start Here Campaign. Hon. d'Entremont, MLA, then proposed that at its earliest convenience, or in an emergency meeting, the committee call in Paul Black, the Director of Policy and Community Relations, to explain the role of the Premier's Office in the decision to circumvent the tendering process.

The matter was deferred to the end of the meeting whereby the following motion was introduced:

"I so move that we would have Mr. Paul Black, who is the director of Policy and Community Relations, come in and maybe present the timeline for this contract and maybe answer some questions on behalf of government for the Ships Start Here contract."

Moved by Hon. Chris d'Entremont, MLA

In response to the motion and subsequent discussion, Mr. Mat Whynott, MLA, tabled a copy of the NSBI Procurement Policy, quoting section 3.8. The Alternative Procurement Policy states, "An unforeseeable situation of urgency or emergency where the good, service, or construction requirement cannot be obtained by means of open procurement procedures."

The motion was carried in a tie vote that was broken by an aye vote by the Chairman.

Upon further discussion, a member of the government stated that he meant to vote "no" against the motion but voted "yes" by reflex reaction. Following this, the chair asked the solicitor for advice on the vote. The solicitor stated that it is up to the Chair to rule on the vote but it is open to any member to appeal to the committee any decision of the chair.

The member appealed the decision of the chair. The committee held a recorded vote on the appeal and it was decided that the appeal be done in a recorded vote.

The vote was carried.

Mr. Andrew Younger, MLA, brought a motion to re-vote on the original motion to call in Mr. Black before the committee to explain the untendered contract.

The motion was defeated.



## REQUESTS FOR DOCUMENTATION

The committee requested and received the following documentation:

- Revenue budget change as a result of a 2% HST increase
- Status of the recommendation reported in the January 2012 Auditor General's Report that the government does not plan to implement
- The process on how the rates on petroleum revenues are calculated
- Details on the auditing of production models with regard to royalty returns
- Details with regard to the one percent increase in salaries and fringe benefits applied across the public sector
- Total costs incurred for the H1N1 preparation and deployment

## TRANSCRIPT:

The transcript for the meeting can be found at:

[http://nslegislature.ca/index.php/committees/committee\\_hansard/C7/pa2012feb29](http://nslegislature.ca/index.php/committees/committee_hansard/C7/pa2012feb29)



WITNESSES

Department of Service Nova Scotia and Municipal Relations

Kevin Malloy – Deputy Minister

Paul Arsenault – Registrar of Motor Vehicles

Robert Devet – Acting Executive Director, Information Management Services

Scott Farmer – Acting Executive Director, Strategy, Integration and Registries

Marianne Hakkert-Lebel – Director of Finance

Nancy MacLellan – Executive Director, Service Delivery

Chief Information Office

Steven Feindel – Acting Executive Director, Infrastructure Services Management

MATTERS OF DISCUSSION

The focus of the meeting was to discuss the audit of the Registry of Motor Vehicles and Registry of Motor Vehicles Information and Technology as reported in the May 2011 Report of the Auditor General.

Service Nova Scotia and Municipal Relations provides a variety of programs and services to businesses, individuals and municipalities ensuring quality delivery service, convenient access and streamlined legislation and information services.

The Registry of Motor Vehicles operates as part of a larger system and interacts directly with other provinces, states and countries. The department states that they handle 90 per cent of routine interactions with government including everything from renewing a driver's licence to registering a new business.

The department values the work of the Auditor General and his staff. Forty per cent of the 34 recommendations have been addressed by the department, work in progress on the remainder. The department is confident they will have nearly all the recommendations addressed in the fiscal year 2012 – 13.

## REQUESTS FOR DOCUMENTATION

The committee requested and received the following documentation:

- A copy of the internal audit final report, once it has been received by the Registry
- A breakdown of driver licensing fees and what they cover
- Response to remaining questions submitted by MLA d'Entremont
- A copy of the RMV Audit Response Tracking

## TRANSCRIPT

The transcript for the meeting can be found at:

[http://nslegislature.ca/index.php/committees/committee\\_hansard/C7/pa2012mar07](http://nslegislature.ca/index.php/committees/committee_hansard/C7/pa2012mar07)

**MEAT INSPECTION PROGRAM**

**March 28, 2012**

**WITNESSES**

Department of Agriculture

Paul LaFleche – Deputy Minister

Mike Horwich – Director of Food Protection and Enforcement

Karen Wong-Petrie – Food Safety Program Analyst

Weldon Myers – Director of Financial Services

**MATTERS OF DISCUSSION**

The focus of the meeting was to discuss the audit of the Meat Inspection Program as reported in the November 2011 Report of the Auditor General.

The Food Protection and Enforcement Division provide for the health protection of Nova Scotians through quality food products. The Meat Inspection Program began in 1985 as a volunteer program. In 1996, the program became mandatory and all meat sold at retail level had to be inspected.

The program is responsible for ensuring compliance with the acts, regulations and policies related to meat production and processing. Inspectors conduct inspections and audits on meat plants using risk-based assessments.

The department has stated that they accept all the process recommendations for their program as outlined by the Auditor General and are addressing these concerns. However, it was said the program takes more of an educational approach as opposed to a regulatory approach.

In all, there are 26 meat plants which are key elements to rural communities, the livestock industry and the buy local initiatives.

**MOTIONS**

At the March 7, 2012, meeting of the Subcommittee on Agenda and Procedures, correspondence was tabled by the Hon. Chris d'Entremont, MLA, urging that an emergency special meeting be held at the committee's earliest convenience to examine the role of the Premier's Office in the awarding of an untendered contract for the Ships Start Here campaign. It was proposed that the committee call Mr. Paul Black and Mr. MacKenzie to the committee.

As agreed to by the subcommittee, the following motion was put forth for full committee approval:

“I move that this become an agenda item at the earliest convenience of the committee”.

By: Hon. Chris d’Entremont, MLA

The motion was defeated

## REQUESTS FOR DOCUMENTATION

The committee requested and received the following documentation:

- A copy of the meat inspectors time activity report

## COMMITTEE BUSINESS

The Standing Committee on Public Accounts approved the following record of decision:

Department of Health and Wellness  
Re: Better Care Sooner

Efficiency Nova Scotia  
Re: Efficiency Programs and Demand-Side Management Fees

Chief Information Office  
Re: Disaster Preparedness – Major Government Information Systems

Department of Health and Wellness  
Re: Overtime Costs for Nursing Staff at Capital Health

Utility and Review Board  
Re: Energy Issues and Power Rates

Also, the Department of Health and Wellness asked permission of the committee to reschedule April 25 meeting re: Overtime Costs for Nursing Staff at Capital Health to a later date in May due to a possible health care strike. The committee agreed.

## TRANSCRIPT

The transcript for the meeting can be found at:

[http://nslegislature.ca/index.php/committees/committee\\_hansard/C7/pa2012mar28](http://nslegislature.ca/index.php/committees/committee_hansard/C7/pa2012mar28)

## WITNESSES

### Department of Health and Wellness

Kevin McNamara – Deputy Minister

Ian Bower – Executive Director, Primary Health Care/EHS

Emily Somers – Provincial Lead, Better Care Sooner

Linda Penny – Chief Financial Officer

## MATTERS OF DISCUSSION

The focus of the meeting was to discuss the Better Care Sooner initiative.

The Better Care Sooner plan, introduced in December 2010, is focused on how to enhance the patient journey through the health care system.

The plan is designed to provide and enhance access to doctors, nurses and other health care professionals; streamline patient-centred emergency care; improve care for seniors, people with mental illness and others with complex needs; effect appropriate use of paramedics; and promote the 811 nurse line.

## TABLED DOCUMENTATION

The following documentation was tabled by Mr. Andrew Younger, MLA:

- News article entitled “N.S. eyes Dartmouth General space; overcrowded hospital could get 51 beds on unfinished fifth floor”

## REQUESTS FOR DOCUMENTATION

The committee requested and received the following documentation:

- A breakdown of the \$998,000 spent on dialysis
- Confirmation of whether the dialysis center in Berwick is moving to Kentville
- The process of application for home care allowance
- A comparison of the annual operational costs of the CEC models in Parrsboro and Springhill
- The cost of ambulance service if covered by government
- A complete breakdown of the Better Care Sooner Advertising campaign

## TRANSCRIPT

The transcript for the meeting can be found at:

[http://nslegislature.ca/index.php/committees/committee\\_hansard/C7/pa2012apr04](http://nslegislature.ca/index.php/committees/committee_hansard/C7/pa2012apr04)





**EFFICIENCY PROGRAMS AND DEMAND-SIDE  
MANAGEMENT FEES**

April 11, 2012

WITNESSES

Efficiency Nova Scotia Corporation

Allan Crandlemire – Chief Executive Officer

Chuck Faulkner – Director of Programs

Stephen MacDonald – Chief Operating Officer

MATTERS OF DISCUSSION

The focus of the meeting was to discuss efficiency programs and demand-side management fees.

Efficiency Nova Scotia is an independent corporation whose mandate is to help Nova Scotians reduce their energy consumption and improve their energy efficiency and conservation. It is not part of Nova Scotia Power and is not a crown corporation or a provincial agency. It is, however, regulated by the Nova Scotia Utility and Review Board.

Demand-side management is essentially finding ways to decrease consumption through increased conservation and efficiency; to manage consumers' demand through incentives and programs, education, outreach and other measures.

The value of energy efficiency is in finding the lowest cost energy alternative, the greenest option available, and in making businesses more competitive.

TRANSCRIPT

The transcript for the meeting can be found at:

[http://nslegislature.ca/index.php/committees/committee\\_hansard/C7/pa2012apr11](http://nslegislature.ca/index.php/committees/committee_hansard/C7/pa2012apr11)



**DISASTER PREPAREDNESS – MAJOR  
GOVERNMENT INFORMATION SYSTEMS**

April 18, 2012

WITNESSES

Chief Information Office (CIO)

Holly Fancy – Chief Information Officer

Steve Feindel – Executive Director, Infrastructure Services Management (CIO)

Kevin Briand – Director, Corporate Information Systems (Department of Finance)

MATTERS OF DISCUSSION

The purpose of the meeting was to discuss disaster preparedness with respect to major government information systems as reported in the November 2011 Report of the Auditor General.

The mandate of the Chief Information Office is to plan, organize and direct efficient, effective and secure information technology services to the provincial government. The office has assumed responsibility for IT service delivery from nine organizations and has streamlined, standardized and reduced much of the complexity in IT delivery.

CIO is the single point of management for data centre and disaster recovery services to support information technology. The CIO has recognized and identified the vulnerabilities of the data centre, as well as the need for a comprehensive disaster recovery plan.

An initiative has been established to acquire an alternate data centre facility to further reduce risks from disaster events. In addition, a single disaster recovery plan has been created to guide government IT staff during an event that requires systems to be supported from alternative locations.

MOTIONS

With regard to agenda items presented on the record of decision from the April 11<sup>th</sup> Subcommittee on Agenda and Procedures meeting, the following motions were made:

“Move that the list omit the Department of Education Special Needs Funding”.

By Mr. Howard Epstein, MLA

The motion is carried

“To remove from the approved list the Department of Justice, the pilot project for adult and youth bail supervision programs”.

By Mr. Howard Epstein, MLA

The motion is carried

“I move that we adopt the four topics, the four remaining topics that emerged from the Subcommittee on Agenda and Procedures”.

By Mr. Howard Epstein, MLA  
The motion is carried

#### REQUESTS FOR DOCUMENTATION

The committee requested and received the following documentation:

- Recent telecommunications savings on a percentage basis

#### COMMITTEE BUSINESS

The Standing Committee on Public Accounts approved the following record of decision:

Department of Service Nova Scotia and Municipal Relations  
Re: Heating Assistance Rebate Program

Capital Health District Health Authority  
Re: Overtime costs for nursing staff at Capital Health

Office of the Auditor General  
Re: May 2012 Report (In Camera)

Office of the Auditor General  
Re: May 2012 Report (Public)

#### TRANSCRIPT

The transcript for the meeting can be found at:

[http://nslegislature.ca/index.php/committees/committee\\_hansard/C7/pa2012apr18](http://nslegislature.ca/index.php/committees/committee_hansard/C7/pa2012apr18)

WITNESSES

Nova Scotia Utility and Review Board

Peter Gurnham – Chairman

Paul Allen – Executive Director

Steve Pronko – Senior Advisor

MATTERS OF DISCUSSION

The focus of the meeting was to discuss energy issues with respect to the resources of the board to fulfill its mandate and examine how the board determines power rates.

The Nova Scotia Utility and Review Board is an independent quasi-judicial body which has both regulatory and adjudicative jurisdiction. The UARB has regulatory authority over energy and power rates for all public electric utilities within the province. This authority includes setting rates, tolls and charges; regulations for provision of service; approval of capital expenditures in excess of \$250,000 and any other matter's necessary to properly exercise its mandate.

COMMITTEE BUSINESS

The committee approved the following record of decision from the Subcommittee on Agenda and Procedures:

Communications Nova Scotia

Re: Government Advertising: the rules and criteria associated with government advertising costs

Department of Environment and Department of Natural Resources

Re: Land Protection and Land Purchases

TRANSCRIPT

The transcript for the meeting can be found at:

[http://nslegislature.ca/index.php/committees/committee\\_hansard/C7/pa2012may02](http://nslegislature.ca/index.php/committees/committee_hansard/C7/pa2012may02)



WITNESSES

Communications Nova Scotia

Tracey Taweel – Associate Deputy Minister  
Angela Campbell – Manager, Client Services  
Kathleen Trott – Director, Marketing  
Kathryn March – Financial Advisor

MATTERS OF DISCUSSION

The focus of the meeting was to discuss the rules and criteria around all costs associated with government advertising.

CNS is a full-service, non-partisan agency that provides services ranging from communications planning to creative services; photography to public safety; media relations to marketing; and websites to webcasts.

CNS embraces the most effective and cost-efficient practices. They deliver critical information about government and share important information on programs and services. They have continued to change how they work as new practices and opportunities emerge, embracing new tools and technologies.

TABLED DOCUMENTATION

The following information was tabled by Mr. Mat Whynott, MLA:

- Website excerpt regarding Ships Start Here entitled “Leader, Progressive Conservative Party of Nova Scotia”

REQUESTS FOR DOCUMENTATION

The committee requested and received the following documentation:

- A list of all the members at the Ship’s Start Here table
- Contributions in dollar amounts from members who were at the table
- Statistics on internet usage / access in Nova Scotia
- A copy of the written policy on social media guidelines
- A copy of the policy regarding political / non-partisan advertising vs. advertising of a program

## COMMITTEE BUSINESS

The Standing Committee on Public Accounts has agreed to postpone the meeting of June 13<sup>th</sup> with the Departments of Environment and Natural Resources regarding Land Protection and Land Purchases. The meeting will be rescheduled in September at the call of the Chair.

## TRANSCRIPT

The transcript for the meeting can be found at:

[http://nslegislature.ca/index.php/committees/committee\\_hansard/C7/pa2012may09](http://nslegislature.ca/index.php/committees/committee_hansard/C7/pa2012may09)



WITNESSES

Department of Service Nova Scotia and Municipal Relations

Kevin Malloy – Deputy Minister

Cameron MacNeil – Executive Director, Program Management & Corporate Services

Catherine Smith – Director, Consumer & Business Programs

Marianne Hakkert-Lebel – Director of Finance

Rhia Perkins – Research & Statistical Officer

MATTERS OF DISCUSSION

The focus of the meeting was to discuss the Heating Assistance Rebate Program.

The Heating Assistance Rebate Program (HARP) assists lower-income Nova Scotians to heat their homes. The program was first launched in October 2008 and is application based. Single persons with incomes of less than \$27,000 and families with incomes of less than \$42,000 as well as people receiving Income Assistance or Guaranteed Income Supplement are eligible to apply. The maximum rebate of \$200 is for all forms of home heating.

Applications for the program are sent to those eligible persons who received the rebate in the previous year. The application is also available on-line, at Access Nova Scotia centres, the Department of Community Services, MLA offices, community groups, and resources centres, as well as Feed Nova Scotia, the Parker Street Food and Furniture Bank, Family Resource Centres and various seniors' organizations and farmers' markets.

Income Assistance case workers and Efficiency Nova Scotia also receive copies of the application forms.

TABLED DOCUMENTATION

The following documentation was tabled by Mr. Andrew Younger, MLA:

- Data regarding the number of applications, number of rebates, staffing levels and programs costs for the variety of heating rebates from 2002/2003 – 2010/2011
- An excerpt from Hansard regarding the heating rebate budget allocation

## REQUESTS FOR DOCUMENTATION

The committee requested and received the following documentation:

- Copies of the “Sworn Affidavit” and the process of application for people who cut their own wood for personal use
- A breakdown of the original grant under the Salvation Army Good Neighbour Program and how much is provided to the recipient currently
- A description of the process for persons in excess of the maximum thresholds above the \$500 increment

## TRANSCRIPT

The transcript for the meeting can be found at:

[http://nslegislature.ca/index.php/committees/committee\\_hansard/C7/pa2012may16](http://nslegislature.ca/index.php/committees/committee_hansard/C7/pa2012may16)

## NURSING STAFF OVERTIME COSTS

May 23, 2012

### WITNESSES

#### Capital District Health Authority

Chris Power – President and CEO

Amanda Whitewood – Vice President, Sustainability and CFO

Kathy MacNeil – Vice President, People

Vicki Sullivan – Health Services Director

### MATTERS OF DISCUSSION

The purpose of the meeting was to discuss overtime costs for nursing staff at Capital Health.

Labour costs account for the greatest portion of health spending. Capital Health depends on their specialized employees to be able to work overtime hours as required based on patient needs or staff shortages.

This is a costly practice, however, the DHA is having success in reducing the use of overtime. Over the last three years, both the use of overtime hours and the amount spent on overtime have been reduced by 30 percent.

The Capital District Health Authority examines historic patterns of use when planning services and staff levels, but the day-to-day range in demand is wide. Similarly, there are difficulties in predicting patterns of sick time use among staff.

Capital Health provides services throughout nine hospitals as well as dozens of community-based locations. They serve the 400,000 residents of the Halifax region and provide specialist services to the rest of Nova Scotia and Atlantic Canada. While overall demand continues to climb steadily, day-to-day volumes cannot be predicted. The present workforce is just under 3,500 RNs and LPNs. Nurses with high skill levels are required to work in specialty positions and, because of this, many overtime hours are filled with senior staff at the top of the pay scale. The ability to hire new nurses has been limited, and the elimination of vacant positions over the last two years was due to fiscal constraints.

### REQUESTS FOR DOCUMENTATION

The committee requested and received the following documentation:

- The number of surgeries cancelled due to staff shortages
- The number of nurses working in the system

### TRANSCRIPT

The transcript for the meeting can be found at:

[http://nslegislature.ca/index.php/committees/committee\\_hansard/C7/pa2012may23](http://nslegislature.ca/index.php/committees/committee_hansard/C7/pa2012may23)



**MAY 2012 REPORT OF THE AUDITOR GENERAL**

*In Camera*

May 30, 2012

WITNESSES

Office of the Auditor General

Jacques Lapointe – Auditor General

Alan Horgan – Deputy Auditor General

Ann McDonald – Assistant Auditor General

Evangeline Colman-Sadd – Assistant Auditor General

MATTERS OF DISCUSSION

The focus of the meeting was to review the Auditor General's May 2012 Report.

This was an *in camera* briefing session afforded to the members of the Standing Committee on Public Accounts to review the report privately prior to the public session and the public release of the report.

COMMITTEE BUSINESS

The Chair announced that there will be no meeting of the Subcommittee on Agenda and Procedure on June 6. The next subcommittee meeting will be in the Fall at the call of the Chair.

TRANSCRIPT

This meeting was *in camera*. No public transcript is available.



WITNESSES

Office of the Auditor General

Jacques Lapointe – Auditor General  
Alan Horgan – Deputy Auditor General  
Terry Spicer – Assistant Auditor General  
Ann McDonald – Assistant Auditor General  
Evangeline Colman-Sadd – Assistant Auditor General

MATTERS OF DISCUSSION

The focus of the meeting was to review the Auditor General's May 2012 Report.

Each of the auditors presented an overview of the report sections for which they were responsible.

The chapters discussed were:

Follow-up of 2005 – 2009 Performance Audit – Recommendations;  
Department of Health and Wellness – Addiction Services at Annapolis Valley Health;  
Department of Health and Wellness – Infection Prevention and Control at Cape Breton District Health Authority and Capital Health;  
Department of Health and Wellness – Nova Scotia Prescription Monitoring Program;  
Department of Justice – Office of Public Trustee

It was mentioned that very little progress within the departments / agencies has been made on the recommendations from the 2005 – 2009 performance audits.

It was also mentioned that information on the status of some past reports/recommendations was provided to Executive Council has been inaccurate. The current audit found 82 errors in the recent Provincial Update Report.

## TABLED DOCUMENTATION

The following documentation was tabled by Mr. Andrew Younger, MLA:

- Excerpt from the Health Authorities Act: “Health-Services Business Plans”
- Excerpt from the Department of Health and Wellness 2012 – 2013 Business Plan “G4 Priority Capital Equipment, Capital Infrastructure, and Master Plan”

## COMMITTEE BUSINESS

The Standing Committee on Public Accounts has adjourned for the summer and will meet again later this fall at the call of the chair.

## TRANSCRIPT

The transcript for the meeting can be found at:

[http://nslegislature.ca/index.php/committees/committee\\_hansard/C7/pa2012jun06](http://nslegislature.ca/index.php/committees/committee_hansard/C7/pa2012jun06)



**SUBCOMMITTEE ON AGENDA AND  
PROCEDURES**



## INTRODUCTION

The Standing Committee on Public Accounts' all-party Subcommittee on Agenda and Procedures is comprised of the Chair, Vice-Chair and a member of the Third Party. The subcommittee meets *in camera* at the call of the Chair to discuss and present agenda proposals to the full committee, assist in finalizing reports, review sensitive documents and monitor the progress of the committee work and other matters as deemed necessary.

When the subcommittee is satisfied with the witnesses/topics suggested, a report is compiled and tabled at the next meeting of the standing committee for consideration and approval.

Once the standing committee approves the report, the clerk completes the agenda by inviting the necessary witnesses to appear before the Standing Committee on Public Accounts.

Once the list nears completion, another Subcommittee on Agenda and Procedures is set so the process can begin again.

The membership of the Subcommittee on Agenda and Procedures is:

Hon. Keith Colwell, MLA – Chair  
Preston

Mr. Howard Epstein, MLA – Vice-Chair  
Halifax Chebucto

Mr. Allan MacMaster, MLA  
Inverness

The following membership changes occurred during the third session of the Sixty-first General Assembly: Hon. Keith Colwell, MLA, (Preston) became the chair replacing Ms. Diana Whalen, MLA, (Halifax Clayton Park).

The Subcommittee on Agenda and Procedures met on the following dates:

September 28, 2011  
November 9, 2011  
January 11, 2012  
February 15, 2012

March 7, 2012  
April 11, 2012  
April 25, 2012



*In camera*

MEMBERS:

Ms. Diana Whalen, MLA – Chair  
Mr. Howard Epstein, MLA – Vice Chair  
Mr. Allan MacMaster, MLA

In Attendance:

Ms. Karen Kinley – Legislative Counsel

AGENDA:

This *in camera* meeting was convened to report back to the standing committee with suggestions for future committee meetings of the Standing Committee on Public Accounts.

The Subcommittee on Agenda and Procedures prepared the following record of decision for approval of the standing committee:

Chief Information Office

Re: Government Telecommunications Expenses

Department of Education

Re: Formula Grants to School Boards

Department of Community Services

Re: Early Childhood Development Services concerning Daycares in Nova Scotia

Department of Labor and Advanced Education

Re: Administrative Penalties for Occupational Health and Safety

Department of Finance

Re: Taxation and Fiscal Policy

Department of Health and Wellness

Re: Colchester Regional Hospital Replacement (May 2011 Auditor General Report)

The subcommittee also put forth the proposed dates for the release of the Auditor General's November 2011 Report.



*In camera*

MEMBERS:

Ms. Diana Whalen, MLA – Chair  
Mr. Howard Epstein, MLA – Vice Chair  
Mr. Allan MacMaster, MLA

In Attendance:

Mr. Jacques Lapointe – Auditor General  
Mr. Gordon Hebb – Chief Legislative Counsel

AGENDA:

At the beginning of this meeting, the Auditor General tabled the process for the release of his annual reports while the House is in session. The proposal outlined what embargo duties are placed on all members of the Legislative Assembly and the press until the report is officially tabled in the House of Assembly.

The Subcommittee on Agenda and Procedures prepared the following record of decision for approval of the standing committee:

Office of the Fire Marshal  
Re: May 2011 Report of the Auditor General

Report of the Auditor General  
Re: January 2012 Report

Department of Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal  
Re: RIM Budget and Asphalt and Chip Sealing Plans

Office of Immigration  
Re: Immigration Strategy

There was some discussion on the previously approved topic, the Department of Finance - Taxation and Fiscal Policy. Concerns were raised that it did not fall under the mandate of Public Accounts and that it was quite vague and needed a sharper focus. It was stated that the Office of the Auditor General would be producing a report on financial audits in January and that this might assist the committee in their decision. Therefore, it was agreed to suspend the finance meeting and place it back on the agenda until after the January Report of the Auditor General.





*In camera*

MEMBERS:

Ms. Diana Whalen, MLA – Chair  
Mr. Howard Epstein, MLA – Vice Chair  
Mr. Allan MacMaster, MLA

In Attendance:

Mr. Jacques Lapointe – Auditor General  
Mr. Gordon Hebb, Q.C. – Legislative Counsel Office

AGENDA:

The focus of the meeting was to approve topics for upcoming meetings for the Standing Committee on Public Accounts.

Due to changes in the committees members' schedules due to out of town caucus meetings and a previous decision to review the January 2012 report of the Auditor General before making any recommendations, nothing was chosen to be brought forward. The committee decided to meet again on February 8<sup>th</sup>.

The only witness put forward for consideration was the Department of Finance to discuss the "Public Accounts of the Province 2010 – 2011" on February 29<sup>th</sup>.

It was also suggested that at the February 8<sup>th</sup> meeting the committee consider following up on issues from the Auditor General's November and May 2011 reports: Meat Inspection Program, Disaster Preparedness, Protection of Persons in Care, Long Term Care Facilities and Registry of Motor Vehicles.



*In camera*

MEMBERS:

Hon. Keith Colwell, MLA – Chair  
Mr. Howard Epstein, MLA – Vice Chair  
Hon. Chris d’Entremont, MLA, substituting for  
Mr. Allan MacMaster, MLA

Also In Attendance:

Mr. Terry Spicer – Assistant Auditor General  
Mr. Gordon Hebb – Chief Legislative Counsel

AGENDA:

The purpose of the meeting was to set topics for future meetings of the Standing Committee on Public Accounts.

The Subcommittee on Agenda and Procedures prepared the following record of decision for approval of the standing committee:

Department of Service Nova Scotia and Municipal Relations  
Re: Registry of Motor Vehicles and Registry of Motor Vehicles Information Technology (May 2011 Report of the Auditor General)

Department of Agriculture – Food Inspection Division  
Re: Meat Inspection Program (November 2011 Report of the Auditor General)

Department of Health and Wellness  
Re: Overtime Costs for Nursing Staff at Capital Health

Department of Health and Wellness  
Re: Communicable Disease Prevention and Control

Department of Health and Wellness  
Re: Prescription Monitoring Board



*In camera*

MEMBERS:

Hon. Keith Colwell, MLA – Chair  
Mr. Howard Epstein, MLA – Vice Chair  
Hon. Chris d’Entremont, MLA, substituting for  
Mr. Allan MacMaster, MLA

In Attendance:

Mr. Jacques Lapointe – Auditor General  
Mr. Gordon Hebb – Chief Legislative Counsel

AGENDA:

The Subcommittee on Agenda and Procedures prepared the following record of decision for approval of the standing committee:

Nova Scotia Utility and Review Board - Energy Issues and Power Rates  
Efficiency Nova Scotia - Efficiency Programs and Demand-side Management Fees  
Department of Health and Wellness - Better Health Care Sooner  
Chief Information Office - Disaster Preparedness – Major Government Information Systems

The subcommittee also discussed the correspondence brought forward by the Hon. Chris d’Entremont, MLA, with regard to the Ships Start Here Campaign. An excerpt from the letter states: “...I am writing today to urge that an emergency special meeting be held at the committee’s earliest convenience to examine the role of the Premier’s Office in the awarding of an untendered contract for the Ships Start Here campaign. Since the committee last considered this issue new information has emerged that makes examination of the issue of critical importance.” “...I propose that the committee call Mr. Paul Black and Mr. MacKenzie to the committee.”

The motion was agreed to be brought forward to the full committee for approval.



*In camera*

MEMBERS:

Hon. Keith Colwell, MLA – Chair  
Mr. Mat Whynott, MLA substituting for  
Mr. Howard Epstein, MLA – Vice Chair  
Mr. Allan MacMaster, MLA

In Attendance:

Mr. Jacques Lapointe - Auditor General  
Mr. Gordon Hebb, Q.C. – Chief Legislative Counsel

AGENDA:

The Subcommittee on Agenda and Procedures prepared the following record of decision for approval of the standing committee:

Department of Justice

Re: The costs and benefits of the pilot projects for adult and youth bail supervision programs

Department of Service Nova Scotia and Municipal Relations

Re: Heating Assistance Rebate Program

Department of Education

Re: Special Needs Funding

Office of the Auditor General

Re: May 2012 Report (In Camera)

Office of the Auditor General

Re: May 2012 Report (Public)

Capital Health District Health Authority

Re: Overtime costs for nursing staff at Capital Health





*In camera*

MEMBERS:

Hon. Keith Colwell, MLA – Chair  
Mr. Howard Epstein, MLA – Vice Chair  
Hon. Chris d’Entremont, MLA substituted for  
Mr. Allan MacMaster, MLA

In Attendance:

Mr. Jacques Lapointe - Auditor General  
Mr. Gordon Hebb, Q.C. – Chief Legislative Counsel

AGENDA:

The focus of the meeting was to bring forth proposed topics for May 9<sup>th</sup> and June 13<sup>th</sup> due to the omission of two topics raised at an earlier committee meeting.

The Subcommittee on Agenda and Procedures prepared the following record of decision for approval of the standing committee:

Communications Nova Scotia  
Re: Government Advertising

Department of Environment and Department of Natural Resources  
Re: Land Protection and Land Purchases

Further clarification on government advertising will be sent to the committee at a later date.

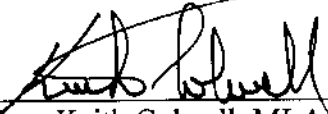


# STATEMENT OF SUBMISSION

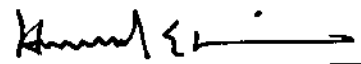


**STATEMENT OF SUBMISSION**

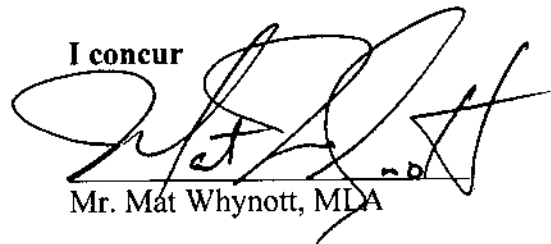
All of which is respectfully submitted to the  
House of Assembly this 4<sup>th</sup> day of October, 2012

  
Hon. Keith Colwell, MLA, Chair

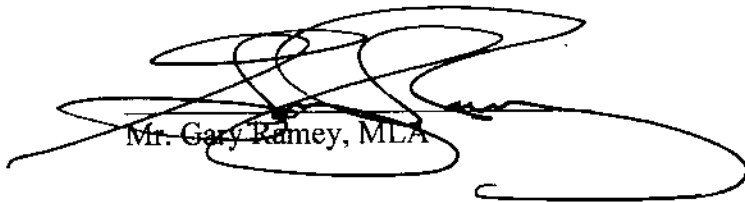
**I concur**

  
Mr. Howard Epstein, MLA, Vice Chair

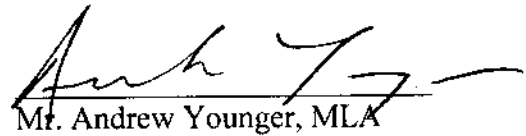
**I concur**

  
Mr. Mat Whynott, MLA

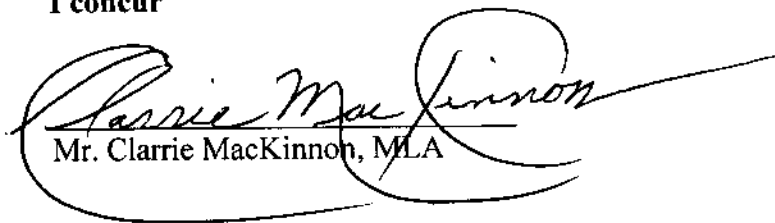
**I concur**

  
Mr. Gary Ramey, MLA

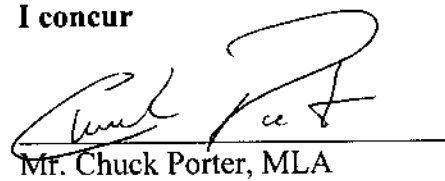
**I concur**

  
Mr. Andrew Younger, MLA

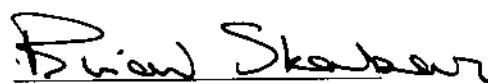
**I concur**

  
Mr. Clarrie MacKinnon, MLA

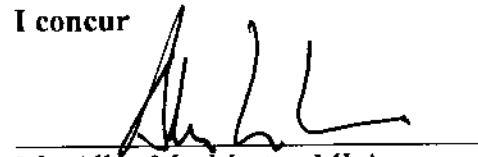
**I concur**

  
Mr. Chuck Porter, MLA

**I concur**

  
Mr. Brian Skabar, MLA

**I concur**

  
Mr. Allan MacMaster, MLA



# APPENDICES





## **Appendix A**

### **List of Tabled Documentation**

#### **February 15, 2012**

##### **Department of Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal**

The following documentation was tabled by the Hon. Chris d'Entremont, MLA:

- FOIPOP information with regard to the cost of chip-sealing the Monte Vista Road, salaries and expenses of the crews, the cost of the consultant for the Monte Vista Road, amortization of TIR equipment and other related information
- Email transmissions with regard to Monte Vista Road

The following documentation was tabled by Mr. Andrew Younger, MLA:

- A table showing the 2010 – 2011 & 2011 – 2012 RIM funding

#### **February 29, 2012**

##### **Department of Finance**

The following documentation was tabled by Mr. Mat Whynott, MLA

- A copy of the NSBI Procurement Policy

The following documentation was tabled by Mr. Andrew Younger, MLA

- News article entitled “AG defends report questioning ethics of debt”
- Section of the Auditor General’s Act
- Section of the Deloitte & Touche LLP Report “Province of Nova Scotia Financial Review – Phase 2 Report”

#### **April 4, 2012**

##### **Department of Health and Wellness**

The following documentation was tabled by Mr. Andrew Younger, MLA

- News article entitled “N.S. eyes Dartmouth General space; overcrowded hospital could get 51 beds on unfinished fifth floor”

#### **May 9, 2012**

##### **Communications Nova Scotia**

The following information was tabled by Mr. Mat Whynott, MLA:

- Website excerpt regarding Ships Start Here entitled “Leader, Progressive Conservative Party of Nova Scotia”

#### **May 16, 2012**

##### **Department of Service Nova Scotia and Municipal Relations**

The following documentation was tabled by Mr. Andrew Younger, MLA

- Data regarding the number of applications, number of rebates, staffing levels and programs costs for the variety of heating rebates from 2002/2003 – 2010/2011
- An excerpt from Hansard regarding the heating rebate budget allocation

**June 6, 2012**

**Office of the Auditor General**

The following documentation was tabled by Mr. Andrew Younger, MLA:

- Excerpt from the Health Authorities Act: “Health-Services Business Plans”
- Excerpt from the Department of Health and Wellness 2012 – 2013 Business Plan  
“G4 Priority Capital Equipment, Capital Infrastructure, and Master Plan”

## **Appendix B List of Motions**

### **February 29, 2012**

At the beginning of the meeting, Hon. Chris d'Entremont, MLA, raised the issue of government spending hundreds of thousands of dollars in untendered contracts on the Ships Start Here Campaign. Hon. d'Entremont, MLA, then proposed that at its earliest convenience, or in an emergency meeting, the committee call in Paul Black, the Director of Policy and Community Relations, to explain the role of the Premier's Office in the decision to circumvent the tendering process.

The matter was deferred to the end of the meeting whereby the following motion was introduced:

“I so move that we would have Mr. Paul Black, who is the director of Policy and Community Relations, come in and maybe present the timeline for this contract and maybe answer some questions on behalf of government for the Ships Start Here contract.”

Moved by Hon. Chris d'Entremont, MLA

In response to the motion and subsequent discussion, Mr. Mat Whynott, MLA, tabled a copy of the NSBI Procurement Policy, quoting section 3.8. The Alternative Procurement Policy states, “An unforeseeable situation of urgency or emergency where the good, service, or construction requirement cannot be obtained by means of open procurement procedures.”

The motion was carried in a tie vote that was broken by an aye vote by the Chairman

Upon further discussion, a member of the government stated that he meant to vote “no” against the motion but voted “yes” by reflex reaction. Following this, the chair asked the solicitor for advice on the vote. The solicitor stated that it is up to the Chair to rule on the vote but it is open to any member to appeal to the committee any decision of the chair.

The member appealed the decision of the chair. The committee held a recorded vote on the appeal and it was decided that the appeal be done in a recorded vote.

The vote was carried

Mr. Andrew Younger, MLA, brought a motion to re-vote on the original motion to call in Mr. Black before the committee to explain the untendered contract.

The motion was defeated

**March 28, 2012**

At the March 7, 2012, meeting of the Subcommittee on Agenda and Procedures, correspondence was tabled by the Hon. Chris d'Entremont, MLA, urging that an emergency special meeting be held at the committee's earliest convenience to examine the role of the Premier's Office in the awarding of an untendered contract for the Ships Start Here campaign. It was proposed that the committee call Mr. Paul Black and Mr. MacKenzie to the committee.

As agreed to by the subcommittee, the following motion was put forth for full committee approval:

"I move that this become an agenda item at the earliest convenience of the committee".

By: Hon. Chris d'Entremont, MLA  
The motion was defeated

**April 18, 2012**

With regard to agenda items presented on the record of decision from the April 11<sup>th</sup> Subcommittee on Agenda and Procedures meeting, the following motions were made:

"Move that the list omit the Department of Education Special Needs Funding".

By Mr. Howard Epstein, MLA  
The motion is carried

"To remove from the approved list the Department of Justice, the pilot project for adult and youth bail supervision programs".

By Mr. Howard Epstein, MLA  
The motion is carried

"I move that we adopt the four topics, the four remaining topics that emerged from the Subcommittee on Agenda and Procedures".

By Mr. Howard Epstein, MLA  
The motion is carried

## **Appendix C**

### **List of Requested Documentation**

**October 12, 2011**

#### **Chief Information Office**

The committee requested and received the following information:

- A document providing a breakdown of the Auditor General's recommendations as referenced in the Chief Information Office Accountability Report
- The date as to when the Nova Scotia Government purchased Microsoft software

**October 19, 2011**

#### **Department of Labour and Advanced Education**

The committee requested and received the following documentation:

- A regional breakdown of administrative penalties by sector
- Clarification on whether or not inspection efforts are guided by the number of Workers' Compensation claims

**October 26, 2011**

#### **Department of Health and Wellness**

The committee requested and received the following information:

- Who was accountable, now or in the past, for this project
- Were any bonuses were paid to senior members of government during the project
- The amount of the bid from the company that did not get the tender on this project
- The names of the firms who replied to the tender for the mechanical and electrical trade components
- Is there any recourse from Hanscomb for the low estimate on the project that they provided to the province
- A listing of the projects that are being worked on currently
- The reason for the Order-in-Council requesting an additional \$51 million increase in August 2007
- A copy of the report that was presented by the consultants to the Colchester-East Hants District Health Authority
- The cost of the "Better Health Care Sooner" commercial ads
- Details as to why the space requirement was more than Cabinet approved
- Information on whether or not staff at the department were involved in changing the estimates that would have gone to Cabinet

**December 14, 2011**

**Department of Health and Wellness**

The committee requested and received the following documentation:

- Copies of the agreements with schools regarding guidelines for supporting students with Type 1 diabetes
- The percentage of individuals across the province who travel more than the one-hour time limit for medical treatment
- Information regarding the income tax deduction for individuals who travel over 70 kilometres for medical treatment
- Copies of the pamphlets on Home Care Dialysis

**January 11, 2012**

**Department of Labour and Advanced Education and  
Office of the Fire Marshal**

The committee requested and received the following documentation:

- A list of the buildings that the Office of the Fire Marshal ordered to be vacated in the past year

**February 8, 2012**

**Department of Finance**

The committee requested and received the following information:

- An outline of the different branches of the Department of Finance and their responsibilities
- Documentation showing the variations of Nova Scotia's bond rating
- A breakdown of the items under "Other Provincial Sources" with regard to royalties for other traditional kinds of natural resources

**February 15, 2012**

**Department of Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal**

The committee requested and received the following documentation:

- Details on salaries, expenses, benefits, the number of employees, etc, involved in the chip seal work
- A copy of the consultant's standing offer and the cost of the consultant;
- Response on the accuracy of the numbers within the tabled 2010 – 2011 RIM funding chart
- Detailed costs on preparation work needed for the chip-seal plant, including all the labour and materials
- A copy of the criteria used to identify which roads would be paved
- Responses to the remaining questions tabled by Hon. d'Entremont, MLA

**February 22, 2012**

**Department of Labour and Advanced Education**

The committee requested and received the following documentation:

- A copy of the new federal-provincial temporary foreign worker agreement
- A copy of any comments by the government of Nova Scotia on Canada's immigration plan since the inception of the Canada-Nova Scotia Co-operation Agreement on Immigration in 2008

**February 29, 2012**

**Department of Finance**

The committee requested and received the following documentation:

- Revenue budget change as a result of a 2% HST increase
- Status of the recommendation reported in the January 2012 Auditor General's Report that the government does not plan to implement
- The process on how the rates on petroleum revenues are calculated
- Details on the auditing of production models with regard to royalty returns
- Details with regard to the one percent increase in salaries and fringe benefits applied across the public sector
- Total costs incurred for the H1N1 preparation and deployment

**March 7, 2012**

**Department of Service Nova Scotia and Municipal Relations**

The committee requested and received the following documentation:

- A copy of the internal audit final report, once it has been received by the Registry
- A breakdown of driver licensing fees and what they cover
- Response to remaining questions submitted by MLA d'Entremont
- A copy of the RMV Audit Response Tracking

**March 28, 2012**

**Department of Agriculture**

The committee requested and received the following documentation:

- A copy of the meat inspectors time activity report

**April 4, 2012**

**Department of Health and Wellness**

The committee requested and received the following documentation:

- A breakdown of the \$998,000 spent on dialysis
- Confirmation of whether the dialysis center in Berwick is moving to Kentville
- The process of application for home care allowance
- A comparison of the annual operational costs of the CEC models in Parrsboro and Springhill
- The cost of ambulance service if covered by government
- A complete breakdown of the Better Care Sooner Advertising campaign

**April 18, 2012**

**Chief Information Office**

The committee requested and received the following documentation:

- Recent telecommunications savings on a percentage basis

**May 9, 2012**

**Communications Nova Scotia**

The committee requested and received the following documentation:

- A list of all the members at the Ship's Start Here table
- Contributions in dollar amounts from members who were at the table
- Statistics on internet usage / access in Nova Scotia
- A copy of the written policy on social media guidelines
- A copy of the policy regarding political / non-partisan advertising vs. advertising of a program

**May 16, 2012**

**Department of Service Nova Scotia and Municipal Relations**

The committee requested and received the following documentation:

- Copies of the "Sworn Affidavit" and the process of application for people who cut their own wood for personal use
- A breakdown of the original grant under the Salvation Army Good Neighbour Program and how much is provided to the recipient currently
- A description of the process for persons in excess of the maximum thresholds above the \$500 increment

**May 23, 2012**

**Capital District Health Authority**

The committee requested and received the following documentation:

- The number of surgeries cancelled due to staff shortages
- The number of nurses working in the system





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