



Standing Committee on Public Accounts

ANNUAL REPORT

2024

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Halifax

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Honourable Danielle Barkhouse
Speaker
House of Assembly
Province House
Halifax, Nova Scotia

Dear Madam Speaker:

On behalf of the Standing Committee on Public Accounts, I am pleased to submit the Annual Report of the committee for September 2023 to August 2024 of the Sixty-fourth General Assembly.

Respectfully submitted,

Lorelei Nicoll, MLA
(Cole Harbour-Dartmouth)
Chair
Standing Committee on Public Accounts

Halifax, Nova Scotia
2024

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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 Sixty-fourth 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:

Lorelei Nicoll, MLA – Chair
Cole Harbour-Dartmouth

Nolan Young, MLA
Shelburne

Danielle Barkhouse, MLA – Vice Chair
Chester-St. Margaret's

Braedon Clark, MLA
Bedford South

Tom Taggart, MLA
Colchester North

Susan Leblanc, MLA
Dartmouth North

John A. MacDonald, MLA
Hants East

Lisa Lachance, MLA
Halifax Citadel-Sable Island

Melissa Sheehy-Ricard, MLA
Hants West

MEMBERSHIP CHANGES

Danielle Barkhouse, MLA, replaced Hon. Kent Smith, MLA in September, 2023.

Braedon Clark, MLA replaced Hon. Brendan Maguire, MLA in February, 2024.

Lorelei Nicoll, MLA replaced Hon. Kelly Regan, MLA in April, 2024.

PROCEDURES AND OPERATIONS

The Public Accounts Committee meets weekly on Wednesday, in the morning. Meetings are held in the Legislative Chamber in Province House. Due to renovations taking place at Province House, the Public Accounts Committee has been meeting in the Committee Room at One Government Place.

The Auditor General for the Province of Nova Scotia attends all meetings of the Standing Committee on Public Accounts.

SUBCOMMITTEE ON AGENDA AND PROCEDURES

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. In recent years a Member of the Official Opposition has also been named to the Subcommittee. The Auditor General and staff attend the meetings of the Subcommittee on Agenda and Procedures, as well.

The Subcommittee on Agenda and Procedures meets in camera at the call of the Chair to review and propose topics to be scheduled before the Public Accounts Committee, assist in finalizing reports, review sensitive documents, monitor the progress of the committee's work and other matters as deemed necessary.

When meeting to review topics for scheduling, a Record of Decision is prepared by the clerk once the subcommittee has reached agreement on the topics to be proposed to the standing committee. The Record of Decision is placed on the agenda for consideration and approval at the next meeting of the standing committee. The standing committee may approve the topics as proposed or may amend the Record of Decision. Once approved, the clerk proceeds to schedule witnesses to appear before the Standing Committee on Public Accounts.

The membership of the Subcommittee on Agenda and Procedures is:

Lorelei Nicoll, MLA – Chair
Cole Harbour-Dartmouth

Braedon Clark, MLA
Bedford South

Danielle Barkhouse, MLA – Vice Chair
Chester-St. Margarets

Susan Leblanc, MLA
Dartmouth North

NOTICES

Notice of Public Accounts Committee meetings is sent to all members of the committee, staff of the caucus offices, Legislative staff, the Auditor General's Office and the House of Assembly Press Gallery. The notices are also posted in Province House and on the committee's web page at the following address: <https://nslegislature.ca/legislative-business/committees/standing/public-accounts>

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 web page at the following address:

<https://nslegislature.ca/legislative-business/committees/standing/public-accounts/archive/public-accounts>

ANNUAL REPORTS

All reports of the Public Accounts Committee are compiled by the Legislative Committees Office and forwarded 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, committee members, all witnesses who appeared before the committee, the Nova Scotia Legislative Library, the Auditor General's Office, the caucus offices and the media. The report is also available to the general public upon request through the Legislative Committees Office, and is available on the committees' web page at the following address:

<https://nslegislature.ca/legislative-business/committees/standing/public-accounts/reports>

RESEARCH MATERIAL

All research for the Public Accounts Committee is compiled by the Legislative Library in consultation with the committee clerk. Research material is compiled in an electronic format and is distributed by the committee clerk 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. Special appreciation is extended to the Legislative Committees Office; Hansard Reporting Services; Legislative Television and Broadcast Services, and the Nova Scotia Legislative Library.

STANDING COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC ACCOUNTS MEETINGS

COMMITTEE BUSINESS

September 20, 2023

WITNESSES

There were no witnesses present.

COMMITTEE BUSINESS

Correspondence was received from:

- Five-year Highway Improvement Plan, 2016-2017, submitted by Kent Smith, MLA
- Public Service Commission
 - Information requested from the June 7, 2022, meeting
- Office of the Auditor General
 - 2022-23 Performance Report and 2023-24 Business Plan
- Department of Public Works
 - Information requested from the June 14, 2022, meeting
- Liberal Caucus Office, Leader of the Opposition dated June 30, 2023
 - A motion was put forward:
 - That the Public Accounts Committee request the Auditor General look into this spending and the partisan act of Communications Nova Scotia.
 - Moved by Hon. Brendan Maguire, MLA
 - A motion was put forward:
 - That this decision be tabled until the next PAC meeting.
 - Moved by John MacDonald, MLA
 - Motion carried
 - Motion tabled

The response from the Department of Municipal Affairs and Housing dated June 1, 2023, providing additional information with respect to the information requested from the May 17, 2023, meeting, which was deferred from June 7, 2023, meeting was discussed. It was felt that the information was still not sufficient, and it was agreed to request further clarification from the department.

The committee continued its discussion of the Record of Decision from the May 3, 2023, meeting of the Subcommittee on Agenda and Procedures. A motion was put forward:

- That we do write letters to the Department of Communities, Culture, Tourism and Heritage and the Department of Finance and Treasury Board regarding the 2018 Grant Programs, and also the Workers' Compensation Board regarding the May 2019 WCB Claims Management Report.
 - Moved by Susan Leblanc, MLA
 - Motion carried

The following was approved:

Letters to those with outstanding recommendations re: Follow-up Report:
 Department of Communities, Culture, Tourism and Heritage and Finance and Treasury Board
 re: 2018 Grant Programs
 Workers Compensation Board re: May 2019 WCB Claims Management

The committee was presented with the Record of Decision from the September 15, 2023, meeting of the Subcommittee on Agenda and Procedures. A motion was put forward:

- That for the topic of Ambulance Ground Services, the following witnesses be called: Deputy Minister of the Department of Health and Wellness and representatives; Emergency Medical Care Incorporated President and COO, and the Nova Scotia Health Interim President and CEO.

- Moved by Nolan Young, MLA

An amendment was put forward:

- That we add a representative from the Nova Scotia Paramedics Union, IUOE Local 727.

- Moved by Susan Leblanc, MLA

- Recorded vote (4 yeas/5 nays)

- Amendment defeated

- Motion carried

A motion was put forward:

- That for the topic 2023 Financial Report of the Auditor General, the following witnesses be called: Department of Finance and Treasury Board, Deputy Minister; Executive Director Government Accounting; and Executive Director Fiscal Policy, Economics and Budgetary Planning.

- Moved by Nolan Young, MLA

- Motion carried

The following items were approved:

WITNESS	TOPIC
Department of Health and Wellness – Deputy Minister and representatives Emergency Medical Care Inc. – President/COO Nova Scotia Health – Interim President/CEO	2023 Report of the Auditor General – Ground Ambulance Services
Department of Finance and Treasury Board – Deputy Minister; Executive Director Government Accounting and Executive Director Fiscal Policy, Economics and Budgetary Planning	2023 Report of the Auditor General – Financial

The committee was also presented with the Record of Decision from the September 20, 2023, meeting of the Subcommittee on Agenda and Procedures. A motion was put forward:

- To split this topic (Investments in Affordable Housing Programming; including student housing needs) into two. One topic would be Investments in Affordable Housing; including Student Housing Needs. The witnesses would be the Deputy Minister of the Department of Municipal Affairs and Housing; a representative of the Affordable Housing Association of Nova Scotia; the Chair of the Executive Panel on Housing in the Halifax Regional Municipality; and the Deputy Minister of Advanced Education. A second topic would be Investments in Initiatives to end Homelessness. The witness would be the Deputy Minister of the Department of Community Services; a representative of Adsum for Women and Children; and a representative from the North End Community Health Centre.

○ Moved by Susan Leblanc, MLA

An amendment was put forward:

- To split the topic into Investments in Affordable Housing Programming with the following witnesses: Deputy Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing; Chair, Executive Panel on Housing in the Halifax Regional Municipality; and the Deputy Minister of Department of Community Services. That Student Housing Needs be added as a separate topic with the following witnesses: Deputy Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing and Deputy Minister of Advanced Education.

○ Moved by Tom Taggart, MLA

A sub-amendment was put forward:

- To amend the witness list to include a representative from city council and/or a representative from the Municipal Housing Authority.

○ Moved by Hon. Brendan Maguire, MLA

A request to extend the meeting was made but not agreed to.

DOCUMENTATION

The following documentation was tabled:

- CBC article dated September 7, 2023: N.S. minister says international students need to take responsibility for finding housing, jobs
- CBC article dated September 14, 2023: Premier calls on HRM council to roll up their sleeves and 'get to work' on housing
- CBC article dated September 15, 2023: Halifax councillor says N.S. premier's housing comments based on 'sheer ignorance'
- Public Service Act – Sections 25IA and 25IB
 - Tabled by Hon. Brendan Maguire, MLA

No documentation was requested.

TRANSCRIPT

https://nslegislature.ca/sites/default/files/pdfs/committees/pa/pa_20230920.pdf

VIDEO

[Sep. 20, 2023 - Public Accounts Committee Proceedings \(youtube.com\)](#)

**2023 REPORT OF THE AUDITOR GENERAL – GROUND AMBULANCE SERVICES:
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND WELLNESS AND EMERGENCY MEDICAL CARE INC.**

September 27, 2023

In Camera

WITNESSES

Office of the Auditor General

Kim Adair – Auditor General

Emily Dickey – Audit Principal

Geoff O'Connor – Audit Principal

Officials from the Office of the Auditor General provided a briefing to the committee regarding the 2023 Report of the Auditor General – Ground Ambulance Services.

**2023 REPORT OF THE AUDITOR GENERAL – GROUND AMBULANCE SERVICES:
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND WELLNESS AND EMERGENCY MEDICAL CARE INC.**

October 4, 2023

WITNESSES

Department of Health and Wellness

Jeannine Lagassé – Deputy Minister

Craig Beaton – Associate Deputy Minister

Jeff Fraser – Executive Director

Emergency Medical Care Inc.

Paula Poirier – President & COO

Charbel Daniel – Executive Director, Provincial Ground Operations

Jan Jensen – Executive Director, Medical Communications, Patient Flow, System Performance

Nova Scotia Health

Karen Oldfield – Interim President & CEO

Dr. Nicole Boutilier – Executive Vice President, Medicine and Clinical Operations

COMMITTEE BUSINESS

A motion was put forward:

- That the Public Accounts Committee add a second meeting on its schedule on the topic of Ground Ambulance Services with the witnesses, the CEO of Nova Scotia Health, the Deputy Minister of the Department of Health and Wellness, EMCI and IUOE Local 727.
 - Moved by Lisa Lachance, MLA

A motion was put forward:

- To defer that topic to the next agenda setting.
 - Moved by Nolan Young, MLA
 - Motion carried
 - Motion deferred

The committee has adopted a practice of endorsing Auditor General recommendations. A motion was put forward:

- That the Public Accounts Committee formally accept and endorse recommendations contained in the 2023 Report of the Auditor General – Ground Ambulance Services: Department of Health and Wellness and Emergency Medical Care Inc. that have been accepted by the audited departments or agencies and ask that those departments and agencies commit to and take responsibility for full and timely implementation of the recommendations accepted by those departments and agencies.
 - Moved by Melissa Sheehy-Richard, MLA
 - Motion carried

The committee continued its discussion of the Record of Decision from the September 20, 2023, meeting of the Subcommittee on Agenda and Procedures. A motion was left on the floor at the September 20, 2023, meeting:

- To split this topic into two. One topic would be Investments in Affordable Housing; including Student Housing Needs and the witnesses would be the Deputy Minister of the Department of Municipal Affairs and Housing; a representative of the Affordable Housing Association of Nova Scotia; the Chair of the Executive Panel on Housing in the HRM; and the Deputy Minister of Advanced Education. A second topic would be Investments in Initiatives to end Homelessness and the witness would be the Deputy Minister of the Department of Community Services; a representative of Adsum for Women and Children; and a representative from the North End Community Health Centre.

○ Moved by Susan Leblanc, MLA

An amendment was put forward:

- To split the topic into Investments in Affordable Housing Programming with the following witnesses: Deputy Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing; Chair, Executive Panel on Housing in HRM; and the Deputy Minister, Department of Community Services. That Student Housing Needs be added as a separate topic with the following witnesses: Deputy Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing and Deputy Minister of Advanced Education.

○ Moved by Tom Taggart, MLA

A sub-amendment was put forward:

- To amend the witness list to include a representative from city council and/or a representative from the Municipal Housing Authority.
 - Moved by Hon. Brendan Maguire, MLA
 - Sub-Amendment defeated
 - Amendment carried
 - Motion as amended carried

The following items were approved:

Deputy Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing; Chair, Executive Panel on Housing in HRM; Deputy Minister, Department of Community Services.	Investments in Affordable Housing Programming
Deputy Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing Deputy Minister of Advanced Education	Student Housing Needs

Clarification was sought regarding the topic: Canada-Nova Scotia Child Care Agreement. The committee agreed it was interested in both the Canada-Wide Early Learning and Child Care Agreement and the Canada-Nova Scotia Early Learning and Child Care Agreement.

The committee was presented with the Record of Decision from the October 4, 2023, meeting of the Subcommittee on Agenda and Procedures. A motion was put forward:

- For the topic Climate Change Adaptation; EMO funding and preparedness for emergency disasters in Nova Scotia; Output-based pricing systems for industry, the following witnesses be called: the Executive Director of EMO; Deputy Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing; Deputy Minister of Environment and Climate Change and Deputy Minister of Public Works.
 - Moved by Nolan Young, MLA

DOCUMENTATION

The following documentation was tabled:

- March 14, 2019 – Standing Committee on Health Hansard Excerpt
 - Tabled by Claudia Chender, MLA

No documentation was requested.

AUDITOR GENERAL REPORT

[Ground Ambulance Services | Office of the Auditor General of Nova Scotia \(oag-ns.ca\)](#)

TRANSCRIPT

https://nslegislature.ca/sites/default/files/pdfs/committees/pa/pa_20231004.pdf

VIDEO

[Oct. 4, 2023 - Public Accounts Committee Proceedings \(youtube.com\)](#)

**2023 REPORT OF THE AUDITOR GENERAL – FOLLOW-UP OF 2018, 2019
AND 2020 PERFORMANCE AUDIT RECOMMENDATIONS
RE: JUNE 2020 REPORT OF THE AUDITOR GENERAL – NOVA SCOTIA
LIQUOR CORPORATION, PHASE I AND MAY 2021 REPORT OF THE AUDITOR
GENERAL – NOVA SCOTIA LIQUOR CORPORATION, PHASE II**

October 11, 2023

WITNESSES

Department of Finance and Treasury Board

Kelliann Dean – Deputy Minister

Lilani Kumaranayake – Associate Deputy Minister

Michael Ingram – Director, Policy and Fiscal Planning

Nova Scotia Liquor Corporation

Greg Hughes – President and CEO

Dave DiPersio – Senior Vice President, Corporate Affairs

Caroline Duchesne – Senior Vice President, Finance and Risk

COMMITTEE BUSINESS

The committee continued its discussion of the Record of Decision from the September 20, 2023, meeting of the Subcommittee on Agenda and Procedures. A motion was put forward:

- That the topic Canada-Nova Scotia Child Care Agreement: Programming Impacts to Date and Funding Impact to the Province's Finances with the witnesses being the deputy minister of Education and Early Childhood Development.
 - Moved by Nolan Young, MLA

An amendment was put forward:

- To add a representative from Child Care Now Nova Scotia, a representative from the Association of Early Childhood Educators, and a representative from the federal department.
 - Moved by Susan Leblanc, MLA
 - Amendment defeated
 - Motion carried

The following items were approved:

DM, Education and Early Childhood Development	Canada - Nova Scotia Child Care Agreement: programming impacts to date and funding impact to the province's finances
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The committee continued its discussion of the Record of Decision from the October 4, 2023, meeting of the Subcommittee on Agenda Procedures. A motion was left on the floor at the October 4, 2023, meeting.

- For the topic Climate Change Adaptation: EMO Funding and Preparedness for Emergency Disasters in Nova Scotia, Output-based Pricing Systems for Industry. The following witnesses would be called: the executive director of EMO, the deputy minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing, the deputy minister of Environment and Climate Change, and the deputy minister of Public Works.

- Moved by Nolan Young, MLA

An amendment was put forward:

- A representative from the PMO and/or the federal Department of Environment and Climate Change, be here in person or via Zoom.
 - Moved by Hon. Brendan Maguire, MLA
 - Recorded vote (4 yeas/5 nays)
 - Amendment defeated
 - Motion carried

A motion was put forward:

- The topic of the Heating Assistance Rebate Program - HARP - with the witnesses, Service Nova Scotia and Internal Services, deputy minister or appropriate representatives.
 - Moved by Nolan Young, MLA
 - Motion carried

A motion was put forward:

- That we table this topic (Capital District Health Infrastructure Projects, with witnesses being Department of Public Works, deputy minister; deputy minister of Finance and Treasury Board; and deputy minister of Health and Wellness) to a future date - an agenda-setting date - for consideration.
 - Moved by Nolan Young, MLA

The following items were approved:

Executive Director of EMO Deputy Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing Deputy Minister of Environment and Climate Change Deputy Minister of Public Works	Climate change adaptation; EMO funding and preparedness for emergency disasters in Nova Scotia; Output-Based Pricing Systems for Industry
Service Nova Scotia and Internal Services, Deputy Minister or appropriate representatives	Heating Assistance Rebate Program (HARP)

DOCUMENTATION

No documentation was tabled.

The following documentation was requested and received:

- What is the average build cost for a cannabis store?
- What is the average annual cost, including labour, to keep one of these stores open?
- Do you keep track of the sales in the Indigenous stores, and is that reported to the government on revenue and sales?
- Do you have figures on the average annual number of cases relating to a young person being able to buy alcohol at an NSLC outlet?
- What was the stakeholder engagement in terms of what Nova Scotians' expectations are of local, and what work was involved with that?
- What programs are out there around harm reduction relating to alcoholism?
- How much of the annual revenue growth is driven by local product sales? What's the expectation for the future?

AUDITOR GENERAL REPORT

[Follow-up of 2018, 2019, and 2020 Performance Audit Recommendations | Office of the Auditor General of Nova Scotia \(oag-ns.ca\)](#)

TRANSCRIPT

https://nslegislature.ca/sites/default/files/pdfs/committees/pa/pa_20231011.pdf

VIDEO

[Oct. 11, 2023 - Public Accounts Committee Proceedings \(youtube.com\)](#)

**PRE-HEARING BRIEFING
RE: INVESTMENTS IN AFFORDABLE HOUSING PROGRAMMING
AND STUDENT HOUSING NEEDS**

October 18, 2023

In Camera

PRESENTERS

Office of the Auditor General

Mike MacPhee – Deputy Auditor General

Rachel MacInnes – Senior Audit Officer

Officials from the Office of the Auditor General provided a pre-hearing briefing to committee members in preparation for upcoming meetings.

PRE-HEARING BRIEFING

RE: HEATING ASSISTANCE REBATE PROGRAM

October 25, 2023

In Camera

PRESENTERS

Office of the Auditor General

Kim Adair – Auditor General

Rachel MacInnes – Senior Audit Officer

Officials from the Office of the Auditor General provided a pre-hearing briefing to committee members in preparation for an upcoming meeting.

PRE-HEARING BRIEFING

**RE: CANADA-NOVA SCOTIA CANADA-WIDE EARLY LEARNING AND
CHILD CARE AGREEMENT: PROGRAMMING IMPACTS TO DATE
AND FUNDING IMPACT TO THE PROVINCE'S FINANCES**

November 1, 2023

In Camera

PRESENTERS

Office of the Auditor General

Kim Adair – Auditor General

Rachel MacInnes – Senior Audit Officer

Officials from the Office of the Auditor General provided a pre-hearing briefing to committee members in preparation for an upcoming meeting.

**PRE-HEARING BRIEFING
RE: CLIMATE CHANGE ADAPTATION;
EMO FUNDING AND PREPAREDNESS FOR EMERGENCY DISASTERS IN NOVA SCOTIA;
OUTPUT-BASED PRICING SYSTEMS FOR INDUSTRY**

November 8, 2023

In Camera

PRESENTERS

Office of the Auditor General

Kim Adair – Auditor General

Rachel MacInnes – Senior Audit Officer

Officials from the Office of the Auditor General provided a pre-hearing briefing to committee members in preparation for an upcoming meeting.

**CLIMATE CHANGE ADAPTATION;
EMO FUNDING AND PREPAREDNESS FOR EMERGENCY DISASTERS IN NOVA SCOTIA;
OUTPUT-BASED PRICING SYSTEMS FOR INDUSTRY**

November 15, 2023

WITNESSES

Department of Environment and Climate Change

Lora MacEachern – Deputy Minister

Andrew Murphy – Associate Deputy Minister

Anthony Weatherbee – Director, Climate Change Division

Department of Municipal Affairs and Housing

Byron Rafuse – Deputy Minister

Department of Public Works

Peter Hackett – Deputy Minister

Mark Peachey – Chief Engineer, Highway Programs

Guy Deveau – Executive Director, Maintenance & Operations

Tonya McLellan – Executive Director, Building Infrastructure

Emergency Management Office

Paul Mason – Executive Director

COMMITTEE BUSINESS

The committee continued its discussion of the Record of Decision from the October 4, 2023, meeting of the Subcommittee on Agenda and Procedures. A motion had been left on the floor at the October 11, 2023, meeting:

- That we table this topic (Capital District Health Infrastructure Projects with witnesses being Department of Public Works, Deputy Minister; Deputy Minister of Finance and Treasury Board; and Deputy Minister of Health and Wellness) to a future date - an agenda-setting date - for consideration.

- Moved by Nolan Young, MLA
- Motion carried

A motion had been deferred from the September 20, 2023, meeting:

- That the Public Accounts Committee request the Auditor General look into this spending and the partisan act of Communications Nova Scotia.
- Moved by Hon. Brendan Maguire, MLA
 - Motion defeated

It was agreed to discuss a motion that had been left on the floor from the October 25, 2023, in camera meeting:

- To create a document, the Rules of Public Accounts.
 - Moved by Susan Leblanc, MLA

A motion was put forward:

- To withdraw the motion.
 - Moved by Susan Leblanc, MLA
 - Motion carried unanimously
 - Motion withdrawn

Correspondence was received from:

- Department of Finance and Treasury Board
 - Response to PAC letter re: Implementation of Auditor General recommendations
- Department of Municipal Affairs and Housing
 - Follow-up information from the May 17, 2023, meeting
 - It was felt that the answer was not satisfactory and it was agreed to write back to the deputy to request further clarification.
- Workers' Compensation Board
 - Response to PAC letter re: Implementation of Auditor General recommendations
- Nova Scotia Liquor Corporation
 - Information requested from the October 11, 2023, meeting

The committee was presented with the 2023 Annual Report for the Standing Committee on Public Accounts. A motion was put forward:

- That the Public Accounts Committee approve the Annual Report.
 - Moved by Nolan Young, MLA
 - Motion carried

It was agreed to remove the agenda item “PAC Path Forward” from the agenda until after the meeting with the Auditor General on December 6, 2023.

A motion was put forward:

- That the committee affirm its support for the removal of all tax on home heating, the exemption of all home heating from carbon pricing and call on the federal government to improve access to home retrofit programs by doubling investments in those programs.
 - Moved by Susan Leblanc, MLA

A motion was put forward:

- To defer this motion.
 - Moved by Hon. Brendan Maguire, MLA

A request to extend the meeting was made but not agreed to.

DOCUMENTATION

No documentation was tabled.

The following documentation was requested and received from the Department of Environment and Climate Change:

- Is Nova Scotia looking at changing the income threshold for our heat pump program?

TRANSCRIPT

https://nslegislature.ca/sites/default/files/pdfs/committees/pa/pa_20231115.pdf

VIDEO

[Nov. 15, 2023 - Public Accounts Committee Proceedings \(youtube.com\)](#)

STUDENT HOUSING NEEDS

November 22, 2023

WITNESSES

Department of Advanced Education

Ryan Grant – Deputy Minister

Lindsay Wadden – Executive Director, Strategy, Policy and Partnerships

Department of Municipal Affairs and Housing

Byron Rafuse – Deputy Minister

Vicki Elliott Lopez – Senior Executive Director

Tatiana Morren Fraser – Executive Director

COMMITTEE BUSINESS

Correspondence was received from:

- Department of Communities, Culture, Tourism & Heritage
 - Response to PAC letter re: Implementation of Auditor General recommendations

A motion was left on the floor at the November 15, 2023, meeting:

- That the committee affirm its support for the removal of all tax on home heating, the exemption of all home heating from carbon pricing and call on the federal government to improve access to home retrofit programs by doubling investments in those programs.
 - Moved by Susan Leblanc, MLA

An amendment was put forward:

- The removal of tax on home heating be targeted and based on income for those who are struggling during the cost-of-living crisis and need it the most.
 - Moved by Hon. Brendan Maguire, MLA
 - Recorded vote (7 nays/2 yeas)
 - Amendment defeated

DOCUMENTATION

The following documentation was tabled:

- Email to Lisa Lachance, MLA, dated November 20, 2023
 - Tabled by Lisa Lachance, MLA
- Letter from Premier Houston to Prime Minister Justin Trudeau dated November 10, 2023
 - Tabled by Nolan Young, MLA

The following documentation was requested and received from the Department of Advanced Education:

- What is the price difference between a regular student housing unit, and a barrier-free unit?
- Acadia University received a \$2.7 million forgivable loan in 2012. How many beds did this create?
- The Advanced Education expenses were \$165.1 million this year, and it was over 24.4 per cent. Can tell us why it was over - what exactly it was or what those costs were from?

The following documentation was requested and received from the Department of Municipal Affairs and Housing:

- Forty of forty-nine municipalities have allowed backyard and secondary suites. Which are the nine that do not have or do not allow for backyard suites?

TRANSCRIPT

https://nslegislature.ca/sites/default/files/pdfs/committees/pa/pa_20231122.pdf

VIDEO

[Nov. 22, 2023 - Public Accounts Committee Proceedings \(youtube.com\)](#)

INVESTMENTS IN AFFORDABLE HOUSING PROGRAMMING

November 29, 2023

WITNESSES

Department of Community Services

Melissa MacKinnon – Deputy Minister

Joy Knight – Executive Director, Employment Supports and Income Assistance

Department of Municipal Affairs and Housing

Byron Rafuse – Deputy Minister

Brian Ward – Executive Director

Pam Menchenton – Executive Director

Adrian Mason – Director, Housing Development and Partnerships

Executive Panel on Housing in HRM

Vicki Elliott Lopez – Chair (Senior Executive Director, DMAH)

Jarrold Baboushkin – Executive Director, Housing Acceleration and Performance, DMAH

COMMITTEE BUSINESS

A motion was left on the floor at the November 22, 2023, meeting:

- That the committee affirm its support for the removal of all tax on home heating, the exemption of all home heating from carbon pricing and call on the federal government to improve access to home retrofit programs by doubling investments in those programs.
 - Moved by Susan Leblanc, MLA

An amendment was put forward:

- For the committee to send a letter to the proper department to see if this could be targeted before we vote on this as a motion.
 - Moved by Hon. Brendan Maguire, MLA
 - Ruled out of order
 - Recorded vote (5 nays/3 yeas)
 - Motion defeated

A motion was put forward:

- That the Subcommittee of Public Accounts shall meet following the regular scheduled meetings.
 - Moved by John MacDonald, MLA

DOCUMENTATION

No documentation was tabled.

The following documentation was requested and received from the Department of Municipal Affairs and Housing:

- Provide the analysis that more supply will result in lower rents.
- Provide our committee with a detailed analysis of the value for money that Nova Scotia is getting on those affordable housing investments?

The following documentation was requested and received from the Executive Panel on Housing in HRM:

- Provide any analysis on the special planning area process compared to HRM's typical process, to see if this is actually making development approvals faster or getting shovels in the ground more quickly?
- How many applications for new special planning areas are currently before the task force?
- Why didn't the Dartmouth Cove project move forward?

TRANSCRIPT

https://nslegislature.ca/sites/default/files/pdfs/committees/pa/pa_20231129.pdf

VIDEO

[Nov. 29, 2023 - Public Accounts Committee Proceedings \(youtube.com\)](#)

2023 REPORT OF THE AUDITOR GENERAL - FINANCIAL

December 6, 2023

In Camera

WITNESSES

Office of the Auditor General

Kim Adair – Auditor General

Morgan McWade – Assistant Auditor General

Kirk Robinson – Audit Principal

Janet White – Audit Principal

Officials from the Office of the Auditor General provided a briefing to the committee regarding the 2023 Report of the Auditor General – Financial.

The committee unanimously agreed to deal with committee business and to make its decisions public. The motion that was left on the floor at the November 29, 2023, meeting was put forward:

- That the Subcommittee of Public Accounts shall meet following when the committee's regularly scheduled business has concluded.
 - Moved by John MacDonald, MLA
 - Motion carried

2023 REPORT OF THE AUDITOR GENERAL – FINANCIAL

December 13, 2023

WITNESSES

Department of Finance and Treasury Board

Kelliann Dean – Deputy Minister

Geoff Gatien – Associate Deputy Minister and Controller

Lilani Kumaranayake – Associate Deputy Minister

Robert Bourgeois – Executive Director, Government Accounting

COMMITTEE BUSINESS

A motion was put forward:

- That we continue the process established by the Public Accounts subcommittee.
 - Moved by Nolan Young, MLA
 - Motion carried

A motion was put forward:

- That health care construction projects and the government procurement process and practice will be the topics moving forward in our January meetings.
 - Moved by Hon. Brendan Maguire, MLA

An amendment was put forward:

- That we table these topics until it's discussed at the subcommittee.
 - Moved by Nolan Young, MLA

DOCUMENTATION

No documentation was tabled.

The following documentation was requested and received:

- Do we have an assessment of whether the additional tax revenue has come from more people or higher incomes? If we can tell that, what is the percentage?
- What was the total cost of that contract (emergency funding for air circulation in classrooms), who received it, how many schools were upgraded and did the contract go through the proper bidding process?
- Can you confirm or deny if the revenue increases from liquor and gaming have led or correspond to increases in preventive programming around gambling and addiction? Is there money being spent to counter the damaging effects?

AUDITOR GENERAL REPORT

[2023 Financial Report | Office of the Auditor General of Nova Scotia \(oag-n.s.ca\)](https://oag-n.s.ca)

TRANSCRIPT

https://nslegislature.ca/sites/default/files/pdfs/committees/pa/pa_20231213.pdf

VIDEO

[Dec. 13, 2023 - Public Accounts Committee Proceedings \(youtube.com\)](#)

COMMITTEE BUSINESS

December 20, 2023

WITNESSES

No witnesses were present.

COMMITTEE BUSINESS

Correspondence was received from:

- Department of Advanced Education
 - Information requested from the November 22, 2023, meeting
- Department of Municipal Affairs and Housing
 - Information requested from the November 22, 2023, meeting
- Executive Panel on Housing in HRM
 - Information requested from the November 29, 2023, meeting
- Department of Municipal Affairs and Housing
 - Information requested from the November 29, 2023, meeting

The committee was presented with the Record of Decision from the December 13, 2023, meeting of the Subcommittee on Agenda and Procedures. A motion was put forward:

- That the first topic be Health Infrastructure Projects - Status update on infrastructure projects progress, spending and timeline including QEII redevelopment construction of transitional care facilities, CBRM healthcare redevelopment project, etc., with the following witnesses: Department of Public Works, Deputy Minister; Build Nova Scotia, Executive Director; Department of Health and Wellness, Deputy Minister; and Service Nova Scotia, Deputy Minister and Chief Procurement Officer.
 - Moved by Hon. Brendan Maguire, MLA

An amendment was put forward:

- That the Record of Decision from December 13, outside of the motion passed on October 4, and as well strike Service Nova Scotia from the topic which is being discussed be accepted by the committee.
 - Moved by Nolan Young, MLA
 - Ruled out of order

A further amendment was put forward:

- To amend Health Infrastructure Projects - Status update on infrastructure projects progress, spending and timeline including QEII redevelopment construction of transitional care facilities, CBRM healthcare redevelopment project, etc., with witnesses being the Department of Public Works, Deputy Minister; Build Nova Scotia, Health Infrastructure Executive Director; and the Department of Health and Wellness, Deputy Minister. Remove Service Nova Scotia.

- Moved by Nolan Young, MLA
- Amendment carried
- Motion as amended carried

A motion was put forward:

- The second topic be Government Procurement Process and Practice – Government compliance to legislation, policy, and guidelines for procurement of capital projects, goods and services, and the witnesses being Department of Service Nova Scotia, Deputy Minister, and Chief Procurement Officer; the Department of Public Works, Deputy Minister; and Build Nova Scotia, Executive Director.
 - Moved by Hon. Brendan Maguire, MLA
 - Motion carried

A motion was put forward:

- On the third topic that we separate Food Insecurity and School Food Initiatives. In one case we would have Food Insecurity – a focus on food insecurity among income assistance recipients, funding of food banks, nutrition and food access funding; and the witnesses would be the Deputy Minister of the Department of Community Services and the Deputy Minister of the Department of Agriculture. The second topic would be School Food Initiatives – Review of school food programs, recent pilot programs, breakfast and lunch programs, food security across the province; and the witnesses would be the Deputy Minister of the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development and the Deputy Minister of the Department of Agriculture.
 - Moved by Susan Leblanc, MLA
 - Motion defeated

A motion was put forward:

- To accept the rest of the items on the Record of Decision from the Subcommittee on December 13, excluding the October 4 motion.
 - Moved by Nolan Young, MLA

An amendment was put forward:

- To add a representative from the College of Paramedics to the topic Progress Update on Actions to Improve Emergency Care. That we add a representative from the Nova Scotia College of Social Workers as a witness to the topic of Review of Social Support Programs (i.e. income assistance, rent supplements, etc.)
 - Moved by Susan Leblanc, MLA
 - Amendment defeated
 - Motion carried

A motion was put forward:

- To adjourn.
 - Moved by Nolan Young, MLA
 - Motion carried

The following items were approved:

WITNESS	TOPIC
Community, Culture, Tourism & Heritage – Deputy Minister	Funding for Museums and Historical Sites - Focus on operational funding for Museums and Historical Sites
Municipal Affairs and Housing – Deputy Minister Public Works and Regional Transportation Agency – Representative(s)	Municipal grant funding and strategic initiatives - Review funding support to municipalities from various departments intended for growth and strengthening municipal infrastructure (i.e. Wastewater infrastructure, roads, transportation, internet, cell, etc.). Also, focus on municipal grant funding, past and present grant formulas, impact on municipal finances
Community Services – Deputy Minister Agriculture – Deputy Minister Education and Early Childhood Development – Deputy Minister	Food Insecurity & School Food Initiatives - Focus on food insecurity among income assistance recipients, funding of food banks, nutrition, and food access funding - Review of school food programs, recent pilot programs, breakfast and lunch programs, food security across province
Health and Wellness – Deputy Minister Nova Scotia Health – President and CEO Emergency Medical Care Inc., Representative	Progress Update on Actions to Improve Emergency Care - January 18, 2023, News Release: Action to Improve Emergency Care – announced to ensure those with the most urgent needs get care quicker, to support paramedics, and to give people more places to receive care, reducing pressure on emergency care. All part of government’s broader strategic plan to improve healthcare.
Department of Community Services – Deputy Minister Department of Municipal Affairs and Housing – Representatives	Review of social support programs (i.e. Income assistance, rent supplements, etc.) - Review how many people benefit from the programs year over year, the amounts invested year over year, in comparison to the high levels of inflation and cost of living in the province.
Public Works – Deputy Minister Build Nova Scotia (Health Infrastructure) – Executive Director Health and Wellness – Deputy Minister	Health Infrastructure Projects - Status update on infrastructure projects progress, spending and timeline including QEII redevelopment, construction of transitional care facilities, CBRM healthcare redevelopment project, etc.

Service Nova Scotia – Deputy Minister and Chief Procurement Officer Public Works – Deputy Minister Build Nova Scotia – Executive Director	Government Procurement process and practice - Government compliance to legislation, policy, and guidelines for procurement of capital projects, goods and services
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DOCUMENTATION

No documentation was tabled or requested.

TRANSCRIPT

https://nslegislature.ca/sites/default/files/pdfs/committees/pa/pa_20231220.pdf

VIDEO

[Dec. 20, 2023 - Public Accounts Committee Proceedings \(youtube.com\)](#)

HEATING ASSISTANCE REBATE PROGRAM

January 10, 2024

WITNESSES

Department of Service Nova Scotia

Joanne Munro – Deputy Minister

Gary O'Toole – Associate Deputy Minister

Rodger Gregg – Executive Director of Business and Consumer Services

Adam Rainforth – Executive Director (for SNS), Finance and Treasury Board

COMMITTEE BUSINESS

A clarification was sought with respect to the witnesses for the topic Government Procurement Process and Practice. It was agreed that the CEO of Build Nova Scotia was the appropriate witness.

A discrepancy was noted in the December 13, 2023, Record of Decision in that it appeared that a representative for Nova Scotia Health was omitted from the witness list with respect to the topic Food Insecurity and School Food Initiatives. The committee agreed that a representative from Nova Scotia Health should be added to the witness list.

The committee has a practice of endorsing Auditor General recommendations. A motion was to put forward:

- That the Public Accounts Committee formally accept and endorse the recommendations in the 2023 Financial Report of the Auditor General.
 - Moved by Lisa Lachance, MLA

An amendment was put forward:

- To add to the end, “that were agreed to by the department.”
 - Moved by John MacDonald, MLA
 - Ruled out of order
 - Motion defeated

The committee agreed to make the decisions from the December 6, 2023, in camera meeting public. The Chair read the motion into the record:

- That the subcommittee of Public Accounts shall meet following when the committee's regularly scheduled business has concluded.
 - Moved by John MacDonald, MLA
 - Motion carried

Correspondence was received from:

- Department of Environment and Climate Change
 - Information requested from the November 15, 2023, meeting

DOCUMENTATION

No documentation was tabled.

The following documentation was requested and received from the Department of Service Nova Scotia:

- The percentage of applications outside of your service standard – what outliers were in terms of some of the longest waits.
- The communication that was provided back and forth to folks in anticipation of launching the program, and also during the program - the standardized communication.
- Table the communications where it stated: This is a one-time payment.

TRANSCRIPT

https://nslegislature.ca/sites/default/files/pdfs/committees/pa/pa_20240110.pdf?20240112

VIDEO

[Jan. 10, 2024 - Public Accounts Committee Proceedings \(youtube.com\)](#)

**CANADA-NOVA SCOTIA CANADA-WIDE EARLY LEARNING AND
CHILD CARE AGREEMENT: PROGRAMMING IMPACTS TO DATE
AND FUNDING IMPACT TO THE PROVINCE'S FINANCES**

January 17, 2024

WITNESSES

Department of Education and Early Childhood Development

Elwin LeRoux – Deputy Minister

Tracey Crowell – Executive Director, Early Childhood Development

Pam Aucoin – Executive Director, Early Learning and Child Care

COMMITTEE BUSINESS

Correspondence was received from:

- Department of Municipal Affairs and Housing
 - Additional Information requested from the May 17, 2023, meeting
- Department of Finance and Treasury Board
 - Information requested from the December 13, 2023, meeting

DOCUMENTATION

No documentation was tabled.

The following documentation was requested and received:

- How many spaces are there right now in Nova Scotia for infant and toddler? How many infant and toddler spaces opened in the last 2 years? How many spaces are needed by 2026?
- Where are the daycare deserts? What areas are in most desperate need for these spaces?
- Of the 1,031 spaces that have closed, do you have a breakdown of infant and toddler and before-and after-school?

TRANSCRIPT

https://nslegislature.ca/sites/default/files/pdfs/committees/pa/pa_20240117.pdf

VIDEO

[Jan. 17, 2024 - Public Accounts Committee Proceedings \(youtube.com\)](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=...)

**PRE-HEARING BRIEFING
RE: FUNDING FOR MUSEUMS AND HISTORICAL SITES AND
MUNICIPAL GRANT FUNDING AND STRATEGIC INITIATIVES**

January 24, 2024

In Camera

PRESENTERS

Office of the Auditor General

Kim Adair – Auditor General

Rachel MacInnes – Audit Manager

Officials from the Office of the Auditor General provided a pre-hearing briefing to committee members in preparation for upcoming meetings.

FUNDING FOR MUSEUMS AND HISTORICAL SITES

January 31, 2024

WITNESSES

Department of Communities, Culture, Tourism & Heritage

Justin Huston – Deputy Minister

Stephanie Smith – Executive Director, Archives, Museums and Libraries

Susan Jeffries – Acting Executive Director, Culture and Heritage Development

COMMITTEE BUSINESS

Correspondence was received from:

- Department of Service Nova Scotia
 - Information requested from the January 10, 2024, meeting

DOCUMENTATION

No documentation was tabled.

The following documentation was requested and received:

- What is the annual maintenance and operating cost of the Art Gallery and the cost of the work that needs to be done?
- COVID-19 had an impact on tourism and part of our tourism is our museums. Do you collect data on the sites and how many people have visited? Do we know the year before COVID, and then during COVID, and then now that we're out of COVID, what the numbers look like?
- What are the revenues from museums and historic sites?
- Provide information regarding the possible heritage property designation of land in Dartmouth which may be the site of an historic African Nova Scotian church.

TRANSCRIPT

https://nslegislature.ca/sites/default/files/pdfs/committees/pa/pa_20240131.pdf

VIDEO

[Jan. 31, 2024 - Public Accounts Committee Proceedings \(youtube.com\)](#)

MUNICIPAL GRANT FUNDING AND STRATEGIC INITIATIVES

February 7, 2024

WITNESSES

Department of Municipal Affairs and Housing

Byron Rafuse – Deputy Minister

Valerie Pottie Bunge – Associate Deputy Minister

Hardy Stuckless – Director, Municipal Infrastructure

Rebecca Doucett – Director of Municipal Finance

Department of Public Works

Peter Hackett – Deputy Minister

Diane Saurette – Chief Operating Officer

David Benoit – CEO, Build Nova Scotia

Joint Regional Transportation Agency

Mark Peck – CEO

COMMITTEE BUSINESS

The committee was presented with the Record of Decision from the January 31, 2024, meeting of the Subcommittee on Agenda and Procedures. A motion was put forward:

- To confirm the record of decision for January 31, 2024, as presented.
 - Moved by John MacDonald, MLA
 - Motion carried

The following items were approved:

WITNESS	TOPIC
Department of Health and Wellness – Deputy Minister Nova Scotia Health – Interim President and CEO Department of Public Works – Deputy Minister Build Nova Scotia – President and CEO Department of Service Nova Scotia – Deputy Minister	2024 Report of the Auditor General – Value for Money: Development of Transitional Care Facilities
TBD after the AG briefing	Report on Misuse of Public Funds at the Liberal Association of Nova Scotia
Department of Finance and Treasury Board – Deputy Minister	2024 Report of the Auditor General – Value for Money of Over-Budget Spending

DOCUMENTATION

No documentation was tabled.

The following documentation was requested and received from the Department of Municipal Affairs and Housing:

- How many tiny homes or Pallet homes is your department involved in providing in the province this year?
- In terms of the incentives with private developers for access to a forgivable loan for building affordable units, how many affordable units, by your definition, have been created through that program to date in Nova Scotia and how many have been committed to?
- Provide a list of which municipalities will be receiving less in Municipal Financial Capacity Grant funding under the new formula and how much less they'll be receiving.
- Provide the list of the 500 active projects that are currently happening in communities across Nova Scotia.
- The 911 fee that's collected on behalf of municipalities by the Province, how is that managed? Is the total filtered back to municipalities? If not, where does the rest go?

The following documentation was requested and received from the Department of Public Works:

- Table documents regarding the 10,000 people who still don't have broadband and what speeds they're receiving.

TRANSCRIPT

https://nslegislature.ca/sites/default/files/pdfs/committees/pa/pa_20240207.pdf

VIDEO

[Feb. 7, 2024 - Public Accounts Committee Proceedings \(youtube.com\)](#)

**2024 REPORT OF THE AUDITOR GENERAL – VALUE FOR MONEY:
DEVELOPMENT OF TRANSITIONAL CARE FACILITIES**

February 14, 2024

In Camera

WITNESSES

Office of the Auditor General

Kim Adair – Auditor General

Michelle Myatt – Audit Principal

Officials from the Office of the Auditor General provided a briefing to the committee regarding the 2024 Report of the Auditor General – Value for Money: Development of Transitional Care Facilities.

**2024 REPORT OF THE AUDITOR GENERAL – REPORT ON THE MISUSE
OF PUBLIC FUNDS AT THE LIBERAL ASSOCIATION OF NOVA SCOTIA**

February 28, 2024

In Camera

WITNESSES

Office of the Auditor General

Kim Adair – Auditor General

Mike MacPhee – Deputy Auditor General

Officials from the Office of the Auditor General provided a briefing to the committee regarding the 2024 Report of the Auditor General – Report on the Misuse of Public Funds at the Liberal Association of Nova Scotia.

COMMITTEE BUSINESS

A motion was put forward:

- That the topic of April 3rd be this topic.
 - Moved by Nolan Young, MLA
 - Motion carried

As the motion was passed at an in camera meeting, it was agreed to make the decision public.

**2024 REPORT OF THE AUDITOR GENERAL – VALUE FOR MONEY OF
OVER-BUDGET SPENDING**

March 6, 2024

In Camera

WITNESSES

Office of the Auditor General

Kim Adair – Auditor General

Geoff O'Connor – Audit Principal

Officials from the Office of the Auditor General provided a briefing to the committee regarding the 2024 Report of the Auditor General – Value for Money of Over-Budget Spending.

2024 REPORT OF THE AUDITOR GENERAL – VALUE FOR MONEY OF OVER-BUDGET SPENDING

March 20, 2024

WITNESSES

Department of Finance and Treasury Board

Kelliann Dean – Deputy Minister

Geoff Gaten – Associate Deputy Minister and Controller

Lilani Kumaranayake – Associate Deputy Minister

Robert Bourgeois – Executive Director, Government Accounting

COMMITTEE BUSINESS

A motion was passed at the February 28, 2024, in camera meeting of the committee. It was agreed to make the decision public. The Chair read the motion into the record.

- That the topic of April 3rd be this topic.
 - Moved by Nolan Young, MLA
 - Motion carried

The committee was presented with the Record of Decision from the March 6, 2024, meeting of the Subcommittee on Agenda and Procedures. Motions were put forward:

- That the Committee accept the following witness lists for upcoming public meetings on Auditor General Reports as follows: Report on Misuse of Public Funds of the Liberal Association of Nova Scotia - Dorothy Rice, Chief Electoral Officer; Paul Doucette, former President of the Liberal Association; Joseph Khoury, former President of the Liberal Association; Margaret Miller, current President of the Liberal Association; the Honourable Zach Churchill, Leader of the Official Opposition, the Liberal Party; the Honourable Iain Rankin, MLA Timberlea-Prospect; Stephen Shupe, Shupe & Company Chartered Professional Accountants, Deloitte representative.
 - Moved by Nolan Young, MLA
 - Motion carried
- That the Committee accept the following witnesses for the 2024 Report of the Auditor General – Preventing and Addressing Violence in Public Schools: The Department of Education and Early Childhood Development, the Deputy Minister.
 - Moved by Nolan Young, MLA
 - Motion carried
- That the committee accept the following witnesses for the 2024 Report of the Auditor General – Cybersecurity Readiness in Healthcare: the Department of Cyber Security and Digital Solutions, the Deputy Minister; Nova Scotia Health Authority, interim President

and CEO, and Department of Health and Wellness, Deputy Minister.

- Moved by Nolan Young, MLA
- Motion carried

- That the committee accept the following witnesses for the 2024 Report of the Auditor General - Health, Safety and Well-being of Children Placed in Temporary Emergency Arrangements and Child and Youth Care Homes. The witness would be the Department of Community Services, Deputy Minister.

- Moved by Nolan Young, MLA
- Motion carried

The following items were approved:

WITNESS	TOPIC
Department of Community Services – Deputy Minister	2024 Report of the Auditor General – Health, Safety and Well-Being of Children Placed in Temporary Emergency Arrangements and Child and Youth Care Homes
Department of Cyber Security and Digital Solutions – Deputy Minister Nova Scotia Health – Interim President and CEO Department of Health and Wellness – Deputy Minister	2024 Report of the Auditor General – Cybersecurity Readiness in Healthcare
Department of Education and Early Childhood Development – Deputy Minister	2024 Report of the Auditor General – Preventing and Addressing Violence in Public Schools
Dorothy Rice – Chief Electoral Officer Paul Doucette – Former President of the Liberal Association of Nova Scotia Joesph Khoury – Former President of the Liberal Association of Nova Scotia Margaret Miller – Current President of the Liberal Association of Nova Scotia The Honourable Zach Churchill – Leader of the Official Opposition and Leader of the Liberal Party of Nova Scotia The Honourable Iain Rankin, MLA for Timberlea-Prospect Stephen Shupe – Shupe & Company Chartered Professional Accountants Deloitte - Representative	Report on the Misuse of Public Funds at the Liberal Association of Nova Scotia

The committee has a practice of endorsing Auditor General Recommendations. A motion was put forward:

- That the Public Accounts Committee formally accept and endorse the recommendations contained in the 2024 Report of the Auditor General – Value for Money of Over-Budget Spending that have been accepted by the Office of the Auditor General.
 - Moved by Nolan Young, MLA
 - Motion carried

Correspondence was received from:

- Department of Education and Early Childhood Education
 - Information requested from the January 17, 2024, meeting
- Department of Communities, Culture, Tourism and Heritage
 - Information requested from the January 31, 2024, meeting
- Department of Municipal Affairs and Housing
 - Information requested from the February 7, 2024, meeting
- Request for Emergency Meeting on February 21, 2024
 - The Chair noted that a poll was conducted in relation to this request, which was not successful.
- Build Nova Scotia
 - Information requested from the February 7, 2024, meeting
 - Further clarification was requested with respect to the response received.

DOCUMENTATION

No documentation was tabled or requested.

AUDITOR GENERAL REPORT

[Value for Money of Over-Budget Spending | Office of the Auditor General of Nova Scotia \(oag-ns.ca\)](#)

TRANSCRIPT

https://nslegislature.ca/sites/default/files/pdfs/committees/pa/pa_20240320.pdf

VIDEO

[Mar. 20, 2024 - Public Accounts Committee Proceedings \(youtube.com\)](#)

**2024 REPORT OF THE AUDITOR GENERAL – VALUE FOR MONEY: DEVELOPMENT
OF TRANSITIONAL CARE FACILITIES**

March 27, 2024

WITNESSES

Department of Health and Wellness

Dana MacKenzie – Deputy Minister

Department of Public Works

Peter Hackett – Deputy Minister

Gerard Jessome – Chief Engineer

Department of Service Nova Scotia

Joanne Munro – Deputy Minister

Chris Mitchell – Chief Procurement Officer

Nova Scotia Health

Karen Oldfield – Interim President & CEO

Derek Spinney – Vice President, Corporate Services, Infrastructure and CFO

Build Nova Scotia

David Benoit – President & CEO

COMMITTEE BUSINESS

The committee has a practice of endorsing Auditor General recommendations. A motion was put forward:

- That the Public Accounts Committee formally accept and endorse recommendations contained in the: 2024 Report of the Auditor General – Value for Money: Development of Transitional Care Facilities, that have been accepted by the audited departments or agencies, and ask that those departments and agencies commit to and take responsibility for full and timely implementation of the recommendations accepted by those departments and agencies.
 - Moved by John MacDonald, MLA
 - Motion carried

A motion was put forward:

- That those witnesses from Deloitte and Shupe and Associates may appear via video.
 - Moved by Nolan Young, MLA
 - Motion carried

Correspondence was received from:

- Email from Paul Lenarczyk
- Ryan Lutes, President - Nova Scotia Teachers Union

DOCUMENTATION

No documentation was tabled.

The following documentation was requested and received from Nova Scotia Health:

- In the Auditor General’s report, Paragraph 1.81, talking about the proposed Bayers Lake transitional care facility, which is no longer happening, it says: “The Bayers Lake transitional care facility was originally anticipated to be a 200-bed facility.” The Hogan Court stand-alone building was to be 68 beds. That’s a total of 268 beds. Under the new proposal there are to be 178 total beds at one site. Can you explain the decrease in beds?

AUDITOR GENERAL REPORT

[Value for Money: Development of Transitional Care Facilities | Office of the Auditor General of Nova Scotia \(oag-ns.ca\)](#)

TRANSCRIPT

https://nslegislature.ca/sites/default/files/pdfs/committees/pa/pa_20240327.pdf

VIDEO

[Mar. 27, 2024 - Public Accounts Committee Proceedings \(youtube.com\)](#)

**2024 REPORT OF THE AUDITOR GENERAL – REPORT ON THE MISUSE OF
PUBLIC FUNDS AT THE LIBERAL ASSOCIATION OF NOVA SCOTIA**

April 3, 2024

WITNESSES

Elections Nova Scotia

Dorothy Rice – Chief Electoral Officer

Lindsay Rodenkirchen – Assistant Chief Electoral Officer

Li Chao – Chief Financial Officer

Liberal Association of Nova Scotia

Margaret Miller – President

Paul Doucette – Former President

Joseph Khoury – Former President

Hon. Zach Churchill – Leader of the Official Opposition and
Leader of the Liberal Party of Nova Scotia

Hon. Iain Rankin – MLA, Timberlea-Prospect

COMMITTEE BUSINESS

The committee has a practice of endorsing Auditor General recommendations. A motion was put forward:

- That the Public Accounts Committee formally accept and endorse recommendations contained in the: 2024 Report of the Auditor General – Report on the Misuse of Public Funds at the Liberal Association of Nova Scotia that have been accepted by the audited departments or agencies, and ask that those departments and agencies commit to and take responsibility for full and timely implementation of the recommendations accepted by those departments and agencies.
 - Moved by John MacDonald, MLA
 - Motion carried

The April 10, 2024, meeting date was discussed. A motion was put forward:

- To have the pre-hearing on the 10th and move the witnesses to the 17th and then the following week - assuming they're available.
 - Moved by Nolan Young, MLA
 - Motion carried

Correspondence was received from:

- Jessica Bouchard

A motion was put forward:

- That the Standing Committee on Public Accounts schedule a meeting on the 2024 Report of the Auditor General Report on Misuse of Public Funds at the Liberal Association of Nova Scotia with witnesses Zach Churchill, MLA for Yarmouth; Joseph Khoury, former president, Liberal Association; Stephen Shupe, Shupe & Company; and a Deloitte representative.
 - Moved by Tom Taggart, MLA

A request to extend the meeting time was made but was not agreed to.

DOCUMENTATION

The following documentation was tabled:

- Email from Zach Churchill, Leader of the Nova Scotia Liberal Party, dated August 3, 2022
- Email from Dr. Joseph Khoury, President, Nova Scotia Liberal Party, dated March 12, 2021
- Email from Iain Rankin, Premier of Nova Scotia, dated March 21, 2021
- Email from Dr. Joseph Khoury, President, Nova Scotia Liberal Party, dated March 30, 2021
- Email from Kelly Regan, Deputy Premier of Nova Scotia, dated March 23, 2021
 - Tabled by Nolan Young, MLA

No documentation was requested.

AUDITOR GENERAL REPORT

[Report on Misuse of Public Funds at the Liberal Association of Nova Scotia | Office of the Auditor General of Nova Scotia \(oag-ns.ca\)](#)

TRANSCRIPT

https://nslegislature.ca/sites/default/files/pdfs/committees/pa/pa_20240403.pdf

VIDEO

[Apr. 3, 2024 - Public Accounts Committee Proceedings \(youtube.com\)](#)

**PRE-HEARING BRIEFING
RE: REVIEW OF SOCIAL SUPPORT PROGRAMS AND
GOVERNMENT PROCUREMENT PROCESS AND PRACTICE**

April 10, 2024

In Camera

PRESENTERS

Office of the Auditor General

Kim Adair – Auditor General (via Zoom)

Rachel MacInnes – Audit Manager

Officials from the Office of the Auditor General provided a pre-hearing briefing to committee members in preparation for upcoming meetings.

The committee unanimously agreed to deal with committee business and to make its decisions public.

As a result of the rescheduling of the topic, “Review of Social Support Programs,” the Deputy Minister of Community Services was not able to appear on April 24, 2024. It was unanimously agreed that Associate Deputy Minister, Cathy MacIsaac, could attend on behalf of the Deputy Minister in order that the meeting could proceed.

GOVERNMENT PROCUREMENT PROCESS AND PRACTICE

April 17, 2024

WITNESSES

Department of Service Nova Scotia

Joanne Munro – Deputy Minister

Chris Mitchell – Chief Procurement Officer

Department of Public Works

Peter Hackett – Deputy Minister

Mark Peachey – Chief Engineer, Highway Programs

Gerard Jessome – Chief Executive of Engineering, Building Infrastructure

Don Maillet – Executive Director, Highway Engineering and Construction

Tonya McLellan – Executive Director

Build Nova Scotia

David Benoit – President and CEO

COMMITTEE BUSINESS

Correspondence was received from:

- Department of Public Works
 - Additional information requested from the February 7, 2024, meeting
- Jessica Bouchard Email
 - Witnesses re: Preventing and Addressing Violence in Schools
- Paula Richardson Email
 - Witnesses re: Preventing and Addressing Violence in Schools
- Susan Leblanc and Lisa Lachance
 - Reconsideration of witness list re: school violence meeting
- Braedon Clark
 - Reconsideration of NSTU as a witness re: Preventing and Addressing Violence in Schools
- Lara Fawthrop Email
 - Witnesses re: Preventing and Addressing Violence in Schools

A motion was put forward:

- To add the Nova Scotia Teachers Union to the list of witnesses for the committee meeting that reviews the Auditor General report on violence in schools.
 - Moved by Lisa Lachance, MLA

An amendment was put forward:

- To also add PSAANS.
 - Moved by Nolan Young, MLA
 - Amendment carried
 - Motion as amended carried

It was agreed to make the decisions made at the April 10, 2024, in camera meeting public, as follows:

- As a result of the rescheduling of the topic, “Review of Social Support Programs,” the Deputy Minister of Community Services was not able to appear on April 24, 2024. It was unanimously agreed that Associate Deputy Minister, Cathy MacIsaac, could attend on behalf of the Deputy Minister in order that the meeting could proceed.

A motion was left on the floor at the April 3, 2024, meeting, as follows:

- That the Standing Committee on Public Accounts schedule a meeting on the 2024 Report of the Auditor General Report on Misuse of Public Funds at the Liberal Association of Nova Scotia with witnesses Zach Churchill, MLA for Yarmouth; Joseph Khoury, former president, Liberal Association; Stephen Shupe, Shupe & Company; and a Deloitte representative.
 - Moved by Tom Taggart, MLA

A motion was put forward:

- To withdraw the motion.
 - Moved by Nolan Young, MLA
 - Motion carried
 - Motion withdrawn

DOCUMENTATION

No documentation was tabled or requested.

TRANSCRIPT

https://nslegislature.ca/sites/default/files/pdfs/committees/pa/pa_20240417.pdf

VIDEO

[Apr. 17, 2024 - Public Accounts Committee Proceedings \(youtube.com\)](#)

REVIEW OF SOCIAL SUPPORT PROGRAMS

April 24, 2024

WITNESSES

Department of Community Services

Cathy MacIsaac – Associate Deputy Minister

Suzanne Ley – Executive Director, Employment Support & Income Assistance

Maria Medioli – Executive Director, Disability Support Program

Tracy Embrett – Executive Director, Child and Family Wellbeing

Department of Municipal Affairs and Housing

Byron Rafuse – Deputy Minister

Kathy Cox-Brown – Project Executive, Housing

COMMITTEE BUSINESS

Correspondence was received from:

- Nova Scotia Health
 - Information requested from the March 27, 2024, meeting

The June meeting schedule was discussed. It was agreed not to hold a meeting on June 26, 2024.

DOCUMENTATION

No documentation was tabled.

The following documentation was requested and received from the Department of Municipal Affairs and Housing:

- Women and children fleeing domestic violence are prioritized on the wait-list. What is the average wait time for this specific demographic?

The following documentation was requested and received from the Department of Community Services:

- Does the department track the average rental costs for income assistance recipients year over year? If you do track, what is the average rental cost for the recipients this year compared to last year? If you don't, how can you ensure recipients can afford to pay their rent?
- We understand income assistance recipients can also receive support for security deposits when they move into new apartments. Are there limitations to that program?
- Is there a cap on additional supports for income assistance recipients transitioning from being unhoused to housed?

TRANSCRIPT

https://nslegislature.ca/sites/default/files/pdfs/committees/pa/pa_20240424.pdf

VIDEO

[Apr. 24, 2024 - Public Accounts Committee Proceedings \(youtube.com\)](#)

**PRE-HEARING BRIEFING
RE: HEALTH INFRASTRUCTURE PROJECTS**

May 1, 2024

In Camera

PRESENTERS

Office of the Auditor General

Mike MacPhee – Deputy Auditor General

Rachel MacInnes – Audit Manager

Officials from the Office of the Auditor General provided a pre-hearing briefing to committee members in preparation for an upcoming meeting.

**2024 REPORT OF THE AUDITOR GENERAL – FOLLOW-UP OF 2019, 2020 AND
2021 PERFORMANCE AUDIT RECOMMENDATIONS**

**2024 REPORT OF THE AUDITOR GENERAL – HEALTH, SAFETY AND
WELL-BEING OF CHILDREN PLACED IN TEMPORARY EMERGENCY
ARRANGEMENTS AND CHILD AND YOUTH CARE HOMES**

May 8, 2024

In Camera

WITNESSES

Office of the Auditor General

Kim Adair – Auditor General

Freda Varley – Audit Principal

Robert Jewer – Audit Principal

Kaitlyn Bowdridge – Senior Audit Officer

Rachel MacInnes – Audit Manager

Officials from the Office of the Auditor General provided a briefing to the committee regarding the 2024 Report of the Auditor General – Follow-up of 2019, 2020 and 2021 Performance Audit Recommendations and the 2024 Report of the Auditor General – Health, Safety and Well-Being of Children Placed in Temporary Emergency Arrangements and Child and Youth Care Homes.

**2024 REPORT OF THE AUDITOR GENERAL – HEALTH, SAFETY AND
WELL-BEING OF CHILDREN PLACED IN TEMPORARY EMERGENCY
ARRANGEMENTS AND CHILD AND YOUTH CARE HOMES**

May 15, 2024

WITNESSES

Department of Community Services

Craig Beaton – Deputy Minister

Tracy Embrett – Executive Director, Child & Family Wellbeing

Shelley Bent James – Executive Director, Service Delivery

COMMITTEE BUSINESS

Correspondence was received from:

- Department of Municipal Affairs and Housing
 - Information requested from the April 24, 2024, meeting

It was noted that Alex Stratford, the president of the Nova Scotia College of Social Workers, was in the audience. A motion was put forward:

- To amend the witness list and add Alex Stratford.
 - Moved by Susan Leblanc, MLA
 - Motion defeated

A motion was put forward:

- That this committee hold a second meeting on this topic in six months time, and the Department of Community Services be called back as a witness to update the committee on its progress in responding to this report.
 - Moved by Susan Leblanc, MLA
 - Motion defeated

DOCUMENTATION

The following documentation was tabled:

- CBC article, “N.S. child and youth commission comes with ‘sense of relief,’ says advocate” dated March 29, 2022
 - Tabled by Braedon Clark, MLA

The following documentation was requested and received:

- When will that position (Child and Youth Advocate) be filled and when do we expect that office to be up and running?
- What was the number of TEAs at the end of the audit period, and in your mind, what explains the drop there since then?

- Do you know how many African Nova Scotian or Indigenous children are currently in TEAs or in some of those homes?

AUDITOR GENERAL REPORT

[Health, Safety and Well-Being of Children Placed in Temporary Emergency Arrangements and Child and Youth Care Homes | Office of the Auditor General of Nova Scotia \(oag-ns.ca\)](#)

TRANSCRIPT

https://nslegislature.ca/sites/default/files/pdfs/committees/pa/pa_20240515.pdf?20240522

VIDEO

[May 15, 2024 - Public Accounts Committee Proceedings \(youtube.com\)](#)

HEALTH INFRASTRUCTURE PROJECTS

May 22, 2024

WITNESSES

Department of Health and Wellness

Dana MacKenzie – Deputy Minister

Colin Stevenson – Chief, System Integration

Derek Spinney – Vice President, Corporate Services, Infrastructure & CFO, Nova Scotia Health

Department of Public Works

Peter Hackett – Deputy Minister

Gerard Jessome – Chief Executive of Engineering, Building Infrastructure

Tonya McLellan – Executive Director

Build Nova Scotia

David Benoit – President & CEO

COMMITTEE BUSINESS

Correspondence was received from:

- Department of Community Services
 - Information requested from the April 24, 2024, meeting

DOCUMENTATION

No documentation was tabled.

The following documentation was requested.

- Estimated cost for the maintenance work and the remediation related to the broken water mains at the Halifax Infirmary?
- The cost of virtual emergency care?

TRANSCRIPT

https://nslegislature.ca/sites/default/files/pdfs/committees/pa/pa_20240522.pdf?20240529

VIDEO

[May 22, 2024 - Public Accounts Committee Proceedings \(youtube.com\)](#)

COMMITTEE DISCUSSION

June 5, 2024

In Camera

WITNESSES

No witnesses were present.

COMMITTEE BUSINESS

The committee met to discuss its operating procedures.

**2024 REPORT OF THE AUDITOR GENERAL – PREVENTING AND
ADDRESSING VIOLENCE IN NOVA SCOTIA PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

June 12, 2024

In Camera

WITNESSES

Office of the Auditor General

Kim Adair – Auditor General

Emily Dickey – Audit Principal

Parmelie Savaria – Audit Manager

Officials from the Office of the Auditor General provided a briefing to the committee regarding the 2024 Report of the Auditor General – Preventing and Addressing Violence in Nova Scotia Public Schools.

**2024 REPORT OF THE AUDITOR GENERAL – PREVENTING AND
ADDRESSING VIOLENCE IN NOVA SCOTIA PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

June 19, 2024

WITNESSES

Department of Education and Early Childhood Development

Elwin LeRoux – Deputy Minister

Annie Baert – Executive Director, Student Services and Equity

Steve Gallagher – Regional Executive Director, Halifax Regional Centre for Education

Michel Collette – Superintendent, Conseil Scolaire Acadien Provincial

Nova Scotia Teachers Union

Ryan Lutes – President

Public School Administrators Association of Nova Scotia

Dr. Scott Armstrong – Chair

COMMITTEE BUSINESS

Correspondence was received from:

- Department of Community Services
 - Information requested from the May 15, 2024, meeting

A motion was put forward:

- That the committee welcome a representative of CUPE to the table to be part of the discussion.
 - Moved by Lisa Lachance, MLA
 - Motion defeated

A motion was put forward:

- That this committee request that the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development work to implement the recommendations from this report before the next school year, including: providing clear directive to teachers regarding discipline in the classroom; committing to hiring more teaching assistants and school support staff to reduce the pressure on teachers in our schools; allowing teachers to have more monitoring time; introducing a detailed plan to reduce overcrowding in our schools. I request that the committee hold a meeting on this topic in September and the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development be called back as a witness to update the committee on its progress in implementing these changes.
 - Moved by Braedon Clark, MLA

The Chair asked for agreement to extend the meeting time, but it was not agreed.

DOCUMENTATION

The following documentation was tabled:

- October 20, 2023, Hansard excerpt from House of Assembly debates
 - Tabled by Susan Leblanc, MLA

The following documentation was requested.

- How many violent incidents have there been so far this year (total violent incidents)?
How many of those incidents were physical violence incidents and how many were non-physical?

AUDITOR GENERAL REPORT

[Preventing and Addressing Violence in Nova Scotia Public Schools | Office of the Auditor General of Nova Scotia \(oag-ns.ca\)](#)

TRANSCRIPT

https://nslegislature.ca/sites/default/files/pdfs/committees/pa/pa_20240619.pdf?20240625

VIDEO

[Jun. 19, 2024 - Public Accounts Committee Proceedings \(youtube.com\)](#)

SUBCOMMITTEE ON AGENDA AND PROCEDURES MEETINGS

September 15, 2023

In Camera – Video Conference

IN ATTENDANCE

Hon. Kelly Regan, MLA – Chair
 Nolan Young, MLA – Vice Chair
 Hon. Brendan Maguire, MLA
 Susan Leblanc, MLA
 Kim Adair – Auditor General
 Mike MacPhee – Deputy Auditor General
 Gordon Hebb, K.C. – Chief Legislative Counsel

COMMITTEE BUSINESS

The subcommittee agreed to propose the following to the full committee:

WITNESS	TOPIC
Department of Health and Wellness – Jeannine Lagassé, Deputy Minister and Jeff Fraser, Executive Director Emergency Medical Care Inc. – Paula Poirier, President/COO Nova Scotia Health – Karen Oldfield, Interim President/CEO IUOE, Local 727, representative	2023 Report of the Auditor General – Ground Ambulance Services
Department of Finance and Treasury Board – Deputy Minister; Executive Director Government Accounting and Executive Director Fiscal Policy, Economics and Budgetary Planning	2023 Report of the Auditor General - Financial

September 20, 2023

In Camera

IN ATTENDANCE

Hon. Kelly Regan, MLA – Chair
 Nolan Young, MLA – Vice Chair
 Hon. Brendan Maguire, MLA
 Susan Leblanc, MLA
 Kim Adair – Auditor General
 Gordon Hebb, K.C. – Chief Legislative Counsel

COMMITTEE BUSINESS

The subcommittee agreed to propose the following to the full committee:

WITNESS	TOPIC
DM, Municipal Affairs and Housing Rep, Affordable Housing Association of Nova Scotia Chair, Executive Panel on Housing in the HRM DM, Department of Community Services Representative, Adsum for Women and Children Rep, North End Community Health Centre DM, Advanced Education	Investments in Affordable Housing Programming; including student housing needs
DM, Education and Early Childhood Development Rep, Child Care Now Nova Scotia Rep, Association of Early Childhood Educators Rep, Federal Government Program	Canada - Nova Scotia Child Care Agreement: programming impacts to date and funding impact to the province's finances

October 4, 2023

In Camera

IN ATTENDANCE

Hon. Kelly Regan, MLA – Chair

Nolan Young, MLA – Vice Chair

Hon. Brendan Maguire, MLA

Lisa Lachance, MLA

Kim Adair – Auditor General

Gordon Hebb, K.C. – Chief Legislative Counsel

COMMITTEE BUSINESS

The subcommittee agreed to propose the following to the full committee:

WITNESS	TOPIC
Executive Director of EMO Deputy Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing Deputy Minister of Environment and Climate Change Executive Director of the Climate Change Division of Environment and Climate Change	Climate change adaptation; EMO funding and preparedness for emergency disasters (fires and flooding) in Nova Scotia; Output-Based Pricing Systems for Industry
Service Nova Scotia and Internal Services, Deputy Minister and appropriate representatives	Heating Assistance Rebate Program (HARP)
Department of Public Works, Deputy Minister Department of Finance and Treasury Board, Deputy Minister Department of Health and Wellness, Deputy Minister	Capital District Health Infrastructure Projects

December 13, 2023

In Camera

IN ATTENDANCE

Hon. Kelly Regan, MLA – Chair

Nolan Young, MLA – Vice Chair

Hon. Brendan Maguire, MLA

Susan Leblanc, MLA

Kim Adair – Auditor General

Gordon Hebb, K.C. – Chief Legislative Counsel

COMMITTEE BUSINESS

The subcommittee agreed to propose the following to the full committee:

WITNESS	TOPIC
Communities, Culture, Tourism & Heritage – Deputy Minister	Funding for Museums and Historical Sites - Focus on operational funding for Museums and Historical Sites
Municipal Affairs and Housing – Deputy Minister Public Works and Regional Transportation Agency – Representative(s)	Municipal grant funding and strategic initiatives - Review funding support to municipalities from various departments intended for growth and strengthening municipal infrastructure (i.e. Wastewater infrastructure, roads, transportation, internet, cell, etc.). Also, focus on municipal grant funding, past and present grant formulas, impact on municipal finances
Community Services – Deputy Minister Agriculture – Deputy Minister Education and Early Childhood Development – Deputy Minister (DM to consider RCE representation) Agriculture – Deputy Minister	Food Insecurity & School Food Initiatives - Focus on food insecurity among income assistance recipients, funding of food banks, nutrition, and food access funding - Review of school food programs, recent pilot programs, breakfast and lunch programs, food security across province
Health and Wellness – Deputy Minister Nova Scotia Health – President and CEO Emergency Medical Care Inc., Representative	Progress Update on Actions to Improve Emergency Care - January 18, 2023, News Release: Action to Improve Emergency Care – announced to ensure those with the most urgent needs get care quicker, to support paramedics, and to give people more places to receive care, reducing pressure on emergency

	care. All part of government's broader strategic plan to improve healthcare.
Department of Community Services – Deputy Minister Department of Municipal Affairs and Housing – Representatives	Review of social support programs (i.e. Income assistance, rent supplements, etc.) - Review how many people benefit from the programs year over year, the amounts invested year over year, in comparison to the high levels of inflation and cost of living in the province.
Public Works – Deputy Minister Build Nova Scotia (Health Infrastructure) – Executive Director Health and Wellness – Deputy Minister Service Nova Scotia – Deputy Minister & Chief Procurement Officer	Health Infrastructure Projects - Status update on infrastructure projects progress, spending and timeline including QEII redevelopment, construction of transitional care facilities, CBRM healthcare redevelopment project, etc.
Service Nova Scotia – Deputy Minister and Chief Procurement Officer Public Works – Deputy Minister Build Nova Scotia – Executive Director	Government Procurement process and practice - Government compliance to legislation, policy, and guidelines for procurement of capital projects, goods and services

January 31, 2024

In Camera

IN ATTENDANCE

Hon. Kelly Regan, MLA – Chair

Nolan Young, MLA – Vice Chair

Hon. Brendan Maguire, MLA

Susan Leblanc, MLA

Adam Harding – Executive Director, Performance Audit Team, OAG

Gordon Hebb, K.C. – Chief Legislative Counsel

COMMITTEE BUSINESS

The subcommittee agreed to propose the following to the full committee:

WITNESS	TOPIC
Department of Health and Wellness – Deputy Minister Nova Scotia Health – Interim President and CEO Department of Public Works – Deputy Minister Build Nova Scotia – President and CEO Department of Service Nova Scotia – Deputy Minister	2024 Report of the Auditor General – Value for Money: Development of Transitional Care Facilities
TBD after the AG briefing	Report on Misuse of Public Funds at the Liberal Association of Nova Scotia
Department of Finance and Treasury Board – Deputy Minister	2024 Report of the Auditor General – Value for Money of Over-Budget Spending

March 6, 2024

In Camera

IN ATTENDANCE

Hon. Kelly Regan, MLA – Chair
 Nolan Young, MLA – Vice Chair
 Braedon Clark, MLA
 Susan Leblanc, MLA
 Kim Adair – Auditor General
 Gordon Hebb, K.C. – Chief Legislative Counsel

COMMITTEE BUSINESS

The subcommittee agreed to propose the following to the full committee:

WITNESS	TOPIC
Department of Community Services – Deputy Minister Nova Scotia College of Social Workers	2024 Report of the Auditor General – Health, Safety and Well-Being of Children Placed in Temporary Emergency Arrangements and Child and Youth Care Homes
Department of Cyber Security and Digital Solutions – Deputy Minister Nova Scotia Health – Interim President and CEO Department of Health and Wellness – Deputy Minister	2024 Report of the Auditor General – Cybersecurity Readiness in Healthcare
Department of Education and Early Childhood Development – Deputy Minister Nova Scotia Teachers Union – President	2024 Report of the Auditor General – Preventing and Addressing Violence in Public Schools
Dorothy Rice – Chief Electoral Officer Paul Doucette – Former President of the Liberal Association of Nova Scotia Joesph Khoury – Former President of the Liberal Association of Nova Scotia Margaret Miller – Current President of the Liberal Association of Nova Scotia The Honourable Zach Churchill – Leader of the Official Opposition and Leader of the Liberal Party of Nova Scotia The Honourable Iain Rankin, MLA for Timberlea-Prospect	Report on the Misuse of Public Funds at the Liberal Association of Nova Scotia

Stephen Shupe – Shupe & Company Chartered Professional Accountants Deloitte – Representative	
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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A - DOCUMENTATION

TABLED DOCUMENTS:

September 20, 2023

The following documentation was tabled:

- CBC article dated September 7, 2023: N.S. minister says international students need to take responsibility for finding housing, jobs
- CBC article dated September 14, 2023: Premier calls on HRM council to roll up their sleeves and ‘get to work’ on housing
- CBC article dated September 15, 2023: Halifax councillor says N.S. premier’s housing comments based on ‘sheer ignorance’
- Public Service Act – Sections 25IA and 25IB
 - Tabled by Hon. Brendan Maguire, MLA

October 4, 2023

The following documentation was tabled:

- March 14, 2019 – Standing Committee on Health Hansard Excerpt
 - Tabled by Claudia Chender, MLA

November 22, 2023

The following documentation was tabled:

- Email to Lisa Lachance, MLA, dated November 20, 2023
 - Tabled by Lisa Lachance, MLA
- Letter from Premier Houston to Prime Minister Justin Trudeau dated November 10, 2023
 - Tabled by Nolan Young, MLA

April 3, 2024

The following documentation was tabled:

- Email from Zach Churchill, Leader of the Nova Scotia Liberal Party, dated August 3, 2022
- Email from Dr. Joseph Khoury, President, Nova Scotia Liberal Party, dated March 12, 2021
- Email from Iain Rankin, Premier of Nova Scotia, dated March 21, 2021
- Email from Dr. Joseph Khoury, President, Nova Scotia Liberal Party, dated March 30, 2021
- Email from Kelly Regan, Deputy Premier of Nova Scotia, dated March 23, 2021
 - Tabled by Nolan Young, MLA

May 15, 2024

The following documentation was tabled:

- CBC article, “N.S. child and youth commission comes with ‘sense of relief,’ says advocate” dated March 29, 2022
 - Tabled by Braedon Clark, MLA

June 19, 2024

The following documentation was tabled:

- October 20, 2023 Hansard excerpt from House of Assembly debates
 - Tabled by Susan Leblanc, MLA

REQUESTED DOCUMENTS:

October 11, 2023

The following documentation was requested and received:

- What is the average build cost for a cannabis store?
- What is the average annual cost, including labour, to keep one of these stores open?
- Do you keep track of the sales in the Indigenous stores, and is that reported to the government on revenue and sales?
- Do you have figures on the average annual number of cases relating to a young person being able to buy alcohol at an NSLC outlet?
- What was the stakeholder engagement in terms of what Nova Scotians’ expectations are of local, and what work was involved with that?
- What programs are out there around harm reduction relating to alcoholism?
- How much of the annual revenue growth is driven by local product sales? What’s the expectation for the future?

November 15, 2023

The following documentation was requested and received from the Department of Environment and Climate Change:

- Is Nova Scotia looking at changing the income threshold for our heat pump program?

November 22, 2023

The following documentation was requested and received from the Department of Advanced Education:

- What is the price difference between a regular student housing unit, and a barrier-free unit?
- Acadia University received a \$2.7 million forgivable loan in 2012. How many beds did this create?
- The Advanced Education expenses were \$165.1 million this year, and it was over 24.4 per cent. Can tell us why it was over - what exactly it was or what those costs were from?

The following documentation was requested and received from the Department of Municipal Affairs and Housing:

- Forty of forty-nine municipalities have allowed backyard and secondary suites. Which are the nine that do not have or do not allow for backyard suites?

November 29, 2023

The following documentation was requested and received from the Department of Municipal Affairs and Housing:

- Provide the analysis that more supply will result in lower rents.
- Provide our committee with a detailed analysis of the value for money that Nova Scotia is getting on those affordable housing investments?

The following documentation was requested and received from the Executive Panel on Housing in HRM:

- Provide any analysis on the special planning area process compared to HRM's typical process, to see if this is actually making development approvals faster or getting shovels in the ground more quickly?
- How many applications for new special planning areas are currently before the task force?
- Why didn't the Dartmouth Cove project move forward?

December 13, 2023

The following documentation was requested and received:

- Do we have an assessment of whether the additional tax revenue has come from more people or higher incomes? If we can tell that, what is the percentage?
- What was the total cost of that contract (emergency funding for air circulation in classrooms), who received it, how many schools were upgraded and did the contract go through the proper bidding process?
- Can you confirm or deny if the revenue increases from liquor and gaming have led or correspond to increases in preventive programming around gambling and addiction? Is there money being spent to counter the damaging effects?

January 10, 2024

The following documentation was requested and received from the Department of Service Nova Scotia:

- The percentage of applications outside of your service standard – what outliers were in terms of some of the longest waits.
- The communication that was provided back and forth to folks in anticipation of launching the program, and also during the program - the standardized communication.
- Table the communications where it stated: This is a one-time payment.

January 17, 2024

The following documentation was requested and received:

- How many spaces are there right now in Nova Scotia for infant and toddler? How many infant and toddler spaces opened in the last 2 years? How many spaces are needed by 2026?
- Where are the daycare deserts? What areas are in most desperate need for these spaces?
- Of the 1,031 spaces that have closed, do you have a breakdown of infant and toddler and before-and after-school?

January 31, 2024

The following documentation was requested and received:

- What is the annual maintenance and operating cost of the Art Gallery and the cost of the work that needs to be done?
- COVID-19 had an impact on tourism and part of our tourism is our museums. Do you collect data on the sites and how many people have visited? Do we know the year before COVID, and then during COVID, and then now that we're out of COVID, what the numbers look like?
- What are the revenues from museums and historic sites?
- Provide information regarding the possible heritage property designation of land in Dartmouth which may be the site of an historic African Nova Scotian church.

February 7, 2024

The following documentation was requested and received from the Department of Municipal Affairs and Housing:

- How many tiny homes or Pallet homes is your department involved in providing in the province this year?
- In terms of the incentives with private developers for access to a forgivable loan for building affordable units, how many affordable units, by your definition, have been created through that program to date in Nova Scotia and how many have been committed to?
- Provide a list of which municipalities will be receiving less in Municipal Financial Capacity Grant funding under the new formula and how much less they'll be receiving.
- Provide the list of the 500 active projects that are currently happening in communities across Nova Scotia.
- The 911 fee that's collected on behalf of municipalities by the Province, how is that managed? Is the total filtered back to municipalities? If not, where does the rest go?

The following documentation was requested and received from the Department of Public Works:

- Table documents regarding the 10,000 people who still don't have broadband and what speeds they're receiving.

March 27, 2024

The following documentation was requested and received from Nova Scotia Health:

- In the Auditor General's report, Paragraph 1.81, talking about the proposed Bayers Lake transitional care facility, which is no longer happening, it says: "The Bayers Lake transitional care facility was originally anticipated to be a 200-bed facility." The Hogan Court stand-alone building was to be 68 beds. That's a total of 268 beds. Under the new proposal there are to be 178 total beds at one site. Can you explain the decrease in beds?

April 24, 2024

The following documentation was requested and received from the Department of Municipal Affairs and Housing:

- Women and children fleeing domestic violence are prioritized on the wait-list. What is the average wait time for this specific demographic?

The following documentation was requested and received from the Department of Community Services:

- Does the department track the average rental costs for income assistance recipients year over year? If you do track, what is the average rental cost for the recipients this year compared to last year? If you don't, how can you ensure recipients can afford to pay their rent?
- We understand income assistance recipients can also receive support for security deposits when they move into new apartments. Are there limitations to that program?
- Is there a cap on additional supports for income assistance recipients transitioning from being unhoused to housed?

May 15, 2024

The following documentation was requested and received:

- When will that position (Child and Youth Advocate) be filled and when do we expect that office to be up and running?
- What was the number of TEAs at the end of the audit period, and in your mind, what explains the drop there since then?
- Do you know how many African Nova Scotian or Indigenous children are currently in TEAs or in some of those homes?

May 22, 2024

The following documentation was requested.

- Estimated cost for the maintenance work and the remediation related to the broken water mains at the Halifax Infirmary?
- The cost of virtual emergency care?

June 19, 2024

The following documentation was requested.

- How many violent incidents have there been so far this year (total violent incidents)?
How many of those incidents were physical violence incidents and how many were non-physical?

APPENDIX B - MOTIONS

September 20, 2023

Correspondence was received from:

- Liberal Caucus Office, Leader of the Opposition dated June 30, 2023
 - A motion was put forward:
 - That the Public Accounts Committee request the Auditor General look into this spending and the partisan act of Communications Nova Scotia.
 - Moved by Hon. Brendan Maguire, MLA
 - A motion was put forward:
 - That this decision be tabled until the next PAC meeting.
 - Moved by John MacDonald, MLA
 - Motion carried
 - Motion tabled

The committee continued its discussion of the Record of Decision from the May 3, 2023, meeting of the Subcommittee on Agenda and Procedures. A motion was put forward:

- That we do write letters to the Department of Communities, Culture, Tourism and Heritage and the Department of Finance and Treasury Board regarding the 2018 Grant Programs, and also the Workers' Compensation Board regarding the May 2019 WCB Claims Management Report.
 - Moved by Susan Leblanc, MLA
 - Motion carried

The committee was presented with the Record of Decision from the September 15, 2023, meeting of the Subcommittee on Agenda and Procedures. A motion was put forward:

- That for the topic of Ambulance Ground Services, the following witnesses be called: Deputy Minister of the Department of Health and Wellness and representatives; Emergency Medical Care Incorporated President and COO, and the Nova Scotia Health Interim President and CEO.
 - Moved by Nolan Young, MLA

An amendment was put forward:

- That we add a representative from the Nova Scotia Paramedics Union, IUOE Local 727.
 - Moved by Susan Leblanc, MLA
 - Recorded vote (4 yeas/5 nays)
 - Amendment defeated
 - Motion carried

A motion was put forward:

- That for the topic 2023 Financial Report of the Auditor General, the following witnesses be called: Department of Finance and Treasury Board, Deputy Minister; Executive

Director Government Accounting; and Executive Director Fiscal Policy, Economics and Budgetary Planning.

- Moved by Nolan Young, MLA
- Motion carried

The committee was also presented with the Record of Decision from the September 20, 2023, meeting of the Subcommittee on Agenda and Procedures. A motion was put forward:

- To split this topic (Investments in Affordable Housing Programming; including student housing needs) into two. One topic would be Investments in Affordable Housing; including Student Housing Needs. The witnesses would be the Deputy Minister of the Department of Municipal Affairs and Housing; a representative of the Affordable Housing Association of Nova Scotia; the Chair of the Executive Panel on Housing in the Halifax Regional Municipality; and the Deputy Minister of Advanced Education. A second topic would be Investments in Initiatives to end Homelessness. The witness would be the Deputy Minister of the Department of Community Services; a representative of Adsum for Women and Children; and a representative from the North End Community Health Centre.

- Moved by Susan Leblanc, MLA

An amendment was put forward:

- To split the topic into Investments in Affordable Housing Programming with the following witnesses: Deputy Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing; Chair, Executive Panel on Housing in the Halifax Regional Municipality; and the Deputy Minister of Department of Community Services. That Student Housing Needs be added as a separate topic with the following witnesses: Deputy Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing and Deputy Minister of Advanced Education.

- Moved by Tom Taggart, MLA

A sub-amendment is put forward:

- To amend the witness list to include a representative from city council and/or a representative from the Municipal Housing Authority.

- Moved by Hon. Brendan Maguire, MLA

October 4, 2023

A motion was put forward:

- That the Public Accounts Committee add a second meeting on its schedule on the topic of Ground Ambulance Services with the witnesses, the CEO of Nova Scotia Health, the Deputy Minister of the Department of Health and Wellness, EMCI and IUOE Local 727.
- Moved by Lisa Lachance, MLA

A motion was put forward:

- To defer that topic to the next agenda setting.
 - Moved by Nolan Young, MLA
 - Motion carried
 - Motion deferred

The committee has adopted a practice of endorsing Auditor General recommendations. A motion was put forward:

- That the Public Accounts Committee formally accept and endorse recommendations contained in the 2023 report of the Auditor General – Ground Ambulance Services: Department of Health and Wellness and Emergency Medical Care Inc. that have been accepted by the audited departments or agencies and ask that those departments and agencies commit to and take responsibility for full and timely implementation of the recommendations accepted by those departments and agencies.
 - Moved by Melissa Sheehy-Richard, MLA
 - Motion carried

The committee continued its discussion of the Record of Decision from the September 20, 2023, meeting of the Subcommittee on Agenda and Procedures. A motion was left on the floor at the September 20, 2023, meeting:

- To split this topic into two. One topic would be Investments in Affordable Housing; including Student Housing Needs and the witnesses would be the Deputy Minister of the Department of Municipal Affairs and Housing; a representative of the Affordable Housing Association of Nova Scotia; the Chair of the Executive Panel on Housing in the HRM; and the Deputy Minister of Advanced Education. A second topic would be Investments in Initiatives to end Homelessness and the witness would be the Deputy Minister of the Department of Community Services; a representative of Adsum for Women and Children; and a representative from the North End Community Health Centre.
 - Moved by Susan Leblanc, MLA

An amendment was put forward:

- To split the topic into Investments in Affordable Housing Programming with the following witnesses: Deputy Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing; Chair, Executive Panel on Housing in HRM; and the Deputy Minister, Department of Community Services. That Student Housing Needs be added as a separate topic with the following witnesses: Deputy Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing and Deputy Minister of Advanced Education.
 - Moved by Tom Taggart, MLA

A sub-amendment was put forward:

- To amend the witness list to include a representative from city council and/or a representative from the Municipal Housing Authority.
 - Moved by Hon. Brendan Maguire, MLA
 - Sub-Amendment defeated
 - Amendment carried
 - Motion as amended carried

The committee was presented with the Record of Decision from the October 4, 2023, meeting of the Subcommittee on Agenda and Procedures. A motion was put forward:

- For the topic Climate Change Adaptation; EMO funding and preparedness for emergency disasters in Nova Scotia; Output-based pricing systems for industry, the following witnesses be called: the Executive Director of EMO; Deputy Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing; Deputy Minister of Environment and Climate Change and Deputy Minister of Public Works.
 - Moved by Nolan Young, MLA

October 11, 2023

The committee continued its discussion of the Record of Decision from the September 20, 2023, meeting of the Subcommittee on Agenda and Procedures. A motion was put forward:

- That the topic Canada-Nova Scotia Child Care Agreement: Programming Impacts to Date and Funding Impact to the Province's Finances with the witnesses being the deputy minister of Education and Early Childhood Development.
 - Moved by Nolan Young, MLA

An amendment was put forward:

- To add a representative from Child Care Now Nova Scotia, a representative from the Association of Early Childhood Educators, and a representative from the federal department.
 - Moved by Susan Leblanc, MLA
 - Amendment defeated
 - Motion carried

The committee continued its discussion of the Record of Decision from the October 4, 2023, meeting of the Subcommittee on Agenda Procedures. A motion was left on the floor at the October 4, 2023, meeting.

- For the topic Climate Change Adaptation: EMO Funding and Preparedness for Emergency Disasters in Nova Scotia, Output-based Pricing Systems for Industry. The following witnesses would be called: the executive director of EMO, the deputy minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing, the deputy minister of Environment and Climate Change, and the deputy minister of Public Works.
 - Moved by Nolan Young, MLA

An amendment was put forward:

- A representative from the PMO and/or the federal Department of Environment and Climate Change, be here in person or via Zoom.
 - Moved by Hon. Brendan Maguire, MLA
 - Recorded vote (4 yeas/5 nays)
 - Amendment defeated
 - Motion carried

A motion was put forward:

- The topic of the Heating Assistance Rebate Program - HARP - with the witnesses, Service Nova Scotia and Internal Services, deputy minister or appropriate representatives.
 - Moved by Nolan Young, MLA
 - Motion carried

A motion was put forward:

- That we table this topic (Capital District Health Infrastructure Projects, with witnesses being Department of Public Works, deputy minister; deputy minister of Finance and Treasury Board; and deputy minister of Health and Wellness) to a future date - an agenda-setting date - for consideration.
 - Moved by Nolan Young, MLA

November 15, 2023

The committee continued its discussion of the Record of Decision from the October 4, 2023, meeting of the Subcommittee on Agenda and Procedures. A motion had been left on the floor at the October 11, 2023, meeting:

- That we table this topic (Capital District Health Infrastructure Projects with witnesses being Department of Public Works, Deputy Minister; Deputy Minister of Finance and Treasury Board; and Deputy Minister of Health and Wellness) to a future date - an agenda-setting date - for consideration.
 - Moved by Nolan Young, MLA
 - Motion carried

A motion had been deferred from the September 20, 2023, meeting:

- That the Public Accounts Committee request the Auditor General look into this spending and the partisan act of Communications Nova Scotia.
 - Moved by Hon. Brendan Maguire, MLA
 - Motion defeated

It was agreed to discuss a motion that had been left on the floor from the October 25, 2023, in

camera meeting:

- To create a document, the Rules of Public Accounts.
 - Moved by Susan Leblanc, MLA

A motion was put forward:

- To withdraw the motion.
 - Moved by Susan Leblanc, MLA
 - Motion carried unanimously
 - Motion withdrawn

The committee was presented with the 2023 Annual Report for the Standing Committee on Public Accounts. A motion was put forward:

- That the Public Accounts Committee approve the Annual Report.
 - Moved by Nolan Young, MLA
 - Motion carried

A motion was put forward:

- That the committee affirm its support for the removal of all tax on home heating, the exemption of all home heating from carbon pricing and call on the federal government to improve access to home retrofit programs by doubling investments in those programs.
 - Moved by Susan Leblanc, MLA

A motion was put forward:

- To defer this motion.
 - Moved by Hon. Brendan Maguire, MLA

November 22, 2023

A motion was left on the floor at the November 15, 2023, meeting:

- That the committee affirm its support for the removal of all tax on home heating, the exemption of all home heating from carbon pricing and call on the federal government to improve access to home retrofit programs by doubling investments in those programs.
 - Moved by Susan Leblanc, MLA

An amendment was put forward:

- The removal of tax on home heating be targeted and based on income for those who are struggling during the cost-of-living crisis and need it the most.
 - Moved by Hon. Brendan Maguire, MLA
 - Recorded vote (7 nays/2 yeas)
 - Amendment defeated

November 29, 2023

A motion was left on the floor at the November 22, 2023, meeting:

- That the committee affirm its support for the removal of all tax on home heating, the exemption of all home heating from carbon pricing and call on the federal government to improve access to home retrofit programs by doubling investments in those programs.
 - Moved by Susan Leblanc, MLA

An amendment was put forward:

- For the committee to send a letter to the proper department to see if this could be targeted before we vote on this as a motion.
 - Moved by Hon. Brendan Maguire, MLA
 - Ruled out of order
 - Recorded vote (5 nays/3 yeas)
 - Motion defeated

A motion was put forward:

- That the Subcommittee of Public Accounts shall meet following the regular scheduled meetings.
 - Moved by John MacDonald, MLA

December 6, 2023

The committee unanimously agreed to deal with committee business and to make its decisions public. The motion that was left on the floor at the November 29, 2023, meeting was put forward.

- That the Subcommittee of Public Accounts shall meet following when the committee's regularly scheduled business has concluded.
 - Moved by John MacDonald, MLA
 - Motion carried

December 13, 2023

A motion was put forward:

- That we continue the process established by the Public Accounts subcommittee.
 - Moved by Nolan Young, MLA
 - Motion carried

A motion was put forward:

- That health care construction projects and the government procurement process and practice will be the topics moving forward in our January meetings.
 - Moved by Hon. Brendan Maguire, MLA

An amendment was put forward:

- That we table these topics until it's discussed at the subcommittee.
 - Moved by Nolan Young, MLA

December 20, 2023

The committee was presented with the Record of Decision from the December 13, 2023, meeting of the Subcommittee on Agenda and Procedures. A motion was put forward:

- That the first topic be Health Infrastructure Projects - Status update on infrastructure projects progress, spending and timeline including QEII redevelopment construction of transitional care facilities, CBRM healthcare redevelopment project, etc., with the following witnesses: Department of Public Works, Deputy Minister; Build Nova Scotia, Executive Director; Department of Health and Wellness, Deputy Minister; and Service Nova Scotia, Deputy Minister and Chief Procurement Officer.
 - Moved by Hon. Brendan Maguire, MLA

An amendment was put forward:

- That the Record of Decision from December 13, outside of the motion passed on October 4, and as well strike Service Nova Scotia from the topic which is being discussed be accepted by the committee.
 - Moved by Nolan Young, MLA
 - Ruled out of order

A further amendment was put forward:

- To amend Health Infrastructure Projects - Status update on infrastructure projects progress, spending and timeline including QEII redevelopment construction of transitional care facilities, CBRM healthcare redevelopment project, etc., with witnesses being the Department of Public Works, Deputy Minister; Build Nova Scotia, Health Infrastructure Executive Director; and the Department of Health and Wellness, Deputy Minister. Remove Service Nova Scotia.
 - Moved by Nolan Young, MLA
 - Amendment carried
 - Motion as amended carried

A motion was put forward:

- The second topic be Government Procurement Process and Practice – Government compliance to legislation, policy, and guidelines for procurement of capital projects, goods and services, and the witnesses being Department of Service Nova Scotia, Deputy Minister, and Chief Procurement Officer; the Department of Public Works, Deputy Minister; and Build Nova Scotia, Executive Director.
 - Moved by Hon. Brendan Maguire, MLA
 - Motion carried

A motion was put forward:

- On the third topic that we separate Food Insecurity and School Food Initiatives. In one case we would have Food Insecurity – a focus on food insecurity among income assistance recipients, funding of food banks, nutrition and food access funding; and the witnesses would be the Deputy Minister of the Department of Community Services and the Deputy Minister of the Department of Agriculture. The second topic would be

School Food Initiatives – Review of school food programs, recent pilot programs, breakfast and lunch programs, food security across the province; and the witnesses would be the Deputy Minister of the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development and the Deputy Minister of the Department of Agriculture.

- Moved by Susan Leblanc, MLA
- Motion defeated

A motion was put forward:

- To accept the rest of the items on the Record of Decision from the Subcommittee on December 13, excluding the October 4 motion.
 - Moved by Nolan Young, MLA

An amendment was put forward:

- To add a representative from the College of Paramedics to the topic Progress Update on Actions to Improve Emergency Care. That we add a representative from the Nova Scotia College of Social Workers as a witness to the topic of Review of Social Support Programs (i.e. income assistance, rent supplements, etc.)
 - Moved by Susan Leblanc, MLA
 - Amendment defeated
 - Motion carried

A motion was put forward:

- To adjourn.
 - Moved by Nolan Young, MLA
 - Motion carried

January 10, 2024

The committee has a practice of endorsing Auditor General recommendations. A motion was to put forward:

- That the Public Accounts Committee formally accept and endorse the recommendations in the 2023 Financial Report of the Auditor General.
 - Moved by Lisa Lachance, MLA

An amendment was put forward:

- To add to the end, “that were agreed to by the department.”
 - Moved by John MacDonald, MLA
 - Ruled out of order
 - Motion defeated

The committee agreed to make the decisions from the December 6, 2023, in camera meeting public. The Chair read the motion into the record:

- That the subcommittee of Public Accounts shall meet following when the committee's

regularly scheduled business has concluded.

- Moved by John MacDonald, MLA
- Motion carried

February 7, 2024

The committee was presented with the Record of Decision from the January 31, 2024, meeting of the Subcommittee on Agenda and Procedures. A motion was put forward:

- To confirm the record of decision for January 31, 2024, as presented.
 - Moved by John MacDonald, MLA
 - Motion carried

February 28, 2024

A motion was put forward:

- That the topic of April 3rd be this topic.
 - Moved by Nolan Young, MLA
 - Motion carried

As the motion was passed at an in camera meeting, it was agreed to make the decision public.

March 20, 2024

A motion was passed at the February 28, 2024, in camera meeting of the committee. It was agreed to make the decision public. The Chair read the motion into the record.

- That the topic of April 3rd be this topic.
 - Moved by Nolan Young, MLA
 - Motion carried

The committee was presented with the Record of Decision from the March 6, 2024, meeting of the Subcommittee on Agenda and Procedures. Motions were put forward:

- That the Committee accept the following witness lists for upcoming public meetings on Auditor General Reports as follows: Report on Misuse of Public Funds of the Liberal Association of Nova Scotia - Dorothy Rice, Chief Electoral Officer; Paul Doucette, former President of the Liberal Association; Joseph Khoury, former President of the Liberal Association; Margaret Miller, current President of the Liberal Association; the Honourable Zach Churchill, Leader of the Official Opposition, the Liberal Party; the Honourable Iain Rankin, MLA Timberlea-Prospect; Stephen Shupe, Shupe & Company Chartered Professional Accountants, Deloitte representative.
 - Moved by Nolan Young, MLA
 - Motion carried
- That the Committee accept the following witnesses for the 2024 Report of the Auditor General – Preventing and Addressing Violence in Public Schools: The Department of Education and Early Childhood Development, the Deputy Minister.
 - Moved by Nolan Young, MLA
 - Motion carried

- That the committee accept the following witnesses for the 2024 Report of the Auditor General – Cybersecurity Readiness in Healthcare: the Department of Cyber Security and Digital Solutions, the Deputy Minister; Nova Scotia Health Authority, interim President and CEO, and Department of Health and Wellness, Deputy Minister.
 - Moved by Nolan Young, MLA
 - Motion carried
- That the committee accept the following witnesses for the 2024 Report of the Auditor General – Health, Safety and Well-being of Children Placed in Temporary Emergency Arrangements and Child and Youth Care Homes. The witness would be the Department of Community Services, Deputy Minister.
 - Moved by Nolan Young, MLA
 - Motion carried

The committee has a practice of endorsing Auditor General Recommendations. A motion was put forward:

- That the Public Accounts Committee formally accept and endorse the recommendations contained in the 2024 Report of the Auditor General – Value for Money of Over-Budget Spending that have been accepted by the Office of the Auditor General.
 - Moved by Nolan Young, MLA
 - Motion carried

March 27, 2024

The committee has a practice of endorsing Auditor General recommendations. A motion was put forward:

- That the Public Accounts Committee formally accept and endorse recommendations contained in the: 2024 Report of the Auditor General – Value for Money: Development of Transitional Care Facilities, that have been accepted by the audited departments or agencies, and ask that those departments and agencies commit to and take responsibility for full and timely implementation of the recommendations accepted by those departments and agencies.
 - Moved by John MacDonald, MLA
 - Motion carried

A motion was put forward:

- That those witnesses from Deloitte and Shupe and Associates may appear via video.
 - Moved by Nolan Young, MLA
 - Motion carried

April 3, 2024

The committee has a practice of endorsing Auditor General recommendations. A motion was put forward:

- That the Public Accounts Committee formally accept and endorse recommendations contained in the: 2024 Report of the Auditor General – Report on the Misuse of Public Funds at the Liberal Association of Nova Scotia that have been accepted by the audited departments or agencies, and ask that those departments and agencies commit to and take responsibility for full and timely implementation of the recommendations accepted by those departments and agencies.
 - Moved by John MacDonald, MLA
 - Motion carried

The April 10, 2024, meeting date was discussed. A motion was put forward:

- To have the pre-hearing on the 10th and move the witnesses to the 17th and then the following week - assuming they're available.
 - Moved by Nolan Young, MLA
 - Motion carried

A motion was put forward:

- That the Standing Committee on Public Accounts schedule a meeting on the 2024 Report of the Auditor General Report on Misuse of Public Funds at the Liberal Association of Nova Scotia with witnesses Zach Churchill, MLA for Yarmouth; Joseph Khoury, former president, Liberal Association; Stephen Shupe, Shupe & Company; and a Deloitte representative.
 - Moved by Tom Taggart, MLA

April 17, 2024

A motion was put forward:

- To add the Nova Scotia Teachers Union to the list of witnesses for the committee meeting that reviews the Auditor General report on violence in schools.
 - Moved by Lisa Lachance, MLA

An amendment was put forward:

- To also add PSAANS.
 - Moved by Nolan Young, MLA
 - Amendment carried
 - Motion as amended carried

A motion was left on the floor at the April 3, 2024, meeting, as follows:

- That the Standing Committee on Public Accounts schedule a meeting on the 2024 Report of the Auditor General Report on Misuse of Public Funds at the Liberal Association of Nova Scotia with witnesses Zach Churchill, MLA for Yarmouth; Joseph Khoury, former president, Liberal Association; Stephen Shupe, Shupe & Company; and a

Deloitte representative.

- Moved by Tom Taggart, MLA

A motion was put forward:

- To withdraw the motion.
 - Moved by Nolan Young, MLA
 - Motion carried
 - Motion withdrawn

May 15, 2024

It was noted that Alex Stratford, the president of the Nova Scotia College of Social Workers, was in the audience. A motion was put forward:

- To amend the witness list and add Alex Stratford.
 - Moved by Susan Leblanc, MLA
 - Motion defeated

A motion was put forward:

- That this committee hold a second meeting on this topic in six months time, and the Department of Community Services be called back as a witness to update the committee on its progress in responding to this report.
 - Moved by Susan Leblanc, MLA
 - Motion defeated

June 19, 2024

A motion was put forward:

- That the committee welcome a representative of CUPE to the table to be part of the discussion.
 - Moved by Lisa Lachance, MLA
 - Motion defeated

A motion was put forward:

- That this committee request that the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development work to implement the recommendations from this report before the next school year, including: providing clear directive to teachers regarding discipline in the classroom; committing to hiring more teaching assistants and school support staff to reduce the pressure on teachers in our schools; allowing teachers to have more monitoring time; introducing a detailed plan to reduce overcrowding in our schools. I request that the committee hold a meeting on this topic in September and the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development be called back as a witness to update the committee on its progress in implementing these changes.
 - Moved by Braedon Clark, MLA

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