



PROVINCE OF NEWFOUNDLAND AND LABRADOR
HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY

HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY
MANAGEMENT COMMISSION

Seventy-sixth Meeting

Wednesday, December 4, 2019

HANSARD

Speaker: Honourable Scott Reid, MHA

The Management Commission met at 6:45 p.m. in the Committee Room.

MR. SPEAKER (Reid): Okay, I think we're on the air now, are we? We are on the air. Okay.

We're going to start the meeting now. Everyone's ready? Okay.

The first thing we're going to do is we're going to introduce ourselves so that the people down in the Broadcast Centre will know who we are when we're speaking.

I'm going to start over here.

CLERK (Barnes): Sandra Barnes, Clerk.

MS. HAWLEY GEORGE: Kim Hawley George, Law Clerk.

MS. COFFIN: Alison Coffin, MHA, St. John's East - Quidi Vidi.

MR. PETTEN: Barry Petten, MHA, Conception Bay South.

MR. BRAZIL: David Brazil, MHA, Conception Bay East - Bell Island.

MR. HAGGIE: John Haggie, MHA, Gander.

MR. LOVELESS: Elvis Loveless, MHA, Fortune Bay - Cape La Hune.

MS. COADY: Siobhan Coady, St. John's West.

MS. RUSSELL: Bobbi Russell, Policy & Communications Officer.

MR. SPEAKER: Scott Reid, Speaker of the House.

I want to remind Members that when they speak, say your name first for the audio recording that we have.

The first thing we have to do is approve the minutes for the November 6, 2019 meeting.

MS. RUSSELL: I just have a revised version. We left Mr. Bennett's name off the Members present, so that was the only change.

MR. SPEAKER: Okay, so that's the only change to the version that we had in the briefing book, right?

MS. RUSSELL: Yeah.

MR. SPEAKER: We need a motion.

MR. HAGGIE: So moved.

MR. BRAZIL: Seconded.

MR. SPEAKER: Okay, Dr. Haggie and MHA Brazil.

On motion, minutes adopted as circulated.

MR. SPEAKER: We'll move on to the next item.

We have some items that we're required to do a report on, one of these is the ruling on allowances used. Process of ruling on allowances use is outlined in section 24 of the *House of Assembly Accountability, Integrity and Administration Act*. The report in Tab 2 provides details with respect to all such rulings for the period ending November 28, 2019. These expenditures were rejected for payment because they were not submitted within 60 days of being made; however, they are in compliance with all provisions of the *Members' Resources and Allowances Rules*.

We've seen these before. They're in the briefing package, so there's no decision required on that.

Any questions or any comments on those? No.

Okay, we'll move to the next one. We have another reporting requirement here. Financial reports for April 1, 2019 to September 30, 2019. The *House of Assembly Accountability, Integrity and Administration Act* states that the Commission must "regularly, and at least quarterly, review the financial performance of the House of Assembly as well as the actual expenditures of members compared with approved allocations." Further information is outlined in Tab 3 of the briefing package. This is for reporting purposes only.

Anyone have any questions related to the information that has been provided? No.

We're in line with where we're supposed to be in terms of the budgeting for the House.

CLERK: This is an election year, so it's a different year anyway.

MR. SPEAKER: This is a different sort of –

CLERK: Yeah.

MR. SPEAKER: Yeah, okay, so the information is there.

The next item is, we've had some considerable, I guess, discussion on this issue, in previous meetings, and we seem to be getting closer to approving some guidelines in this matter.

The Management Commission directed the development of a policy on the reimbursement of legal fees for Members at its November 7, 2018 meeting. The matter was considered at the September 25 and November 6, 2019 meetings, with a decision deferring pending further research and analysis.

Based on the direction provided at the November 6 meeting, the attached draft guide on reimbursement of legal fees for Members is provided for the Commission to consider. I trust the Commission has had a chance to review the draft components.

Any comments on this? Comments? Questions?

MS. COADY: I have one and this is under 4.0. As you indicated, Mr. Speaker, I think we're getting very close.

This is under 4.0 Requests for Reimbursement. "Requests for reimbursement **can only be made ... at the conclusion of the matter**, once all applicable recourse mechanisms have been exhausted (i.e. appeals, court costs awarded, etc.)."

My only concern is the appropriateness of waiting, which could be an extensive period of time. The reason I say that is Members might be engaged in an issue and may not have the financial means to carry it for an extended period of time.

So I raise that, I'm just wondering is there some accommodation or is there some mechanism that we could do it in instalments or through the Management Commission, may have an avenue to give some leeway to that?

I'm concerned about 4.0 for that purpose. Not having the ability to pay until the end when everything is completed might be problematic for some.

MR. SPEAKER: Okay, we'll turn that over to the –

MS. RUSSELL: You can take this one, Madam Clerk.

CLERK: I will point out under section 3 Guidelines: "The Management Commission may, at its discretion, grant an exception to the above-noted guidelines if it determines that reimbursement of legal expenses is appropriate and in the public interest." We could add into that, that the Management Commission can consider at any point, essentially.

MS. RUSSELL: We could add the same wording to section 4 so that generally it would be accepted at the conclusion of the matter –

MS. COADY: I'm happy now.

MS. RUSSELL: – but gives the Management Commission discretion to –

MS. COADY: That's fine. We need that discretion.

MS. RUSSELL: Yeah.

CLERK: Yeah.

AN HON. MEMBER: Yeah, that's what I was going to suggest.

MR. SPEAKER: MHA Petten.

MR. PETTEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I thought that was part of – I did miss that actually, until it was mentioned to me by Siobhan, but the initial consultation, I thought the concept behind that – because we didn't even have an amount there – is protecting you

from the beginning onward; not to put that stress on a person from the get-go. I know you can put a clause there, but I thought that was kind of the basis of our policy anyway is to protect you from the onset until it's approved.

So your initial consult would be almost like an estimate of some sort. That's what I thought we kind of agreed on. I remember we were talking about \$2,000 and \$5,000, and you pointed out the risk of setting an amount. So we said we'd have an initial consultation, which I thought the initial consultation would give you an idea of what's involved and then we would approve it after that.

Now, it seems like we're going to still – we're putting another condition in there before we get to approving it. That's just my concern, I suppose. I agree with you, I just think we're making it a bit more convoluted than what we anticipated.

MR. SPEAKER: Yes. So that's one of the items that is left blank, is the amount of the initial consultation and how much we're going to allow for the – I'm going to move to Dr. Haggie now to (inaudible).

MR. HAGGIE: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

In actual fact, Barry has made my comment. I think putting an amount in would be problematic because there may be a tendency for that amount then to become a floor. I think the intent was that the Member would not be disadvantaged financially, whether that was a small amount or a significant amount, and that the Commission, in the exercise of its discretion, would undertake that the initial consultation would be covered. Then after that, then kind of pay as you go or pay by installments, depending on the nature of the beast. If it's a small cost, then totting up at the end might not be an issue. So I saw the two as kind of a process that was continuous.

MR. PETTEN: (Inaudible.)

MR. SPEAKER: So just for clarity. Are you suggesting that we not establish a set amount? That we –

MR. HAGGIE: No amount.

MR. SPEAKER: No amount. Okay.

Ms. Coffin.

MS. COFFIN: Instead of dollar amounts, why don't we measure in time? It's a thought, right.

I don't know how long an initial consultation – it will depend on the matter, but maybe we could say you could have an additional consultation that ranges from –

CLERK: Up to five hours.

MS. COFFIN: – up to five hours or is two hours, or perhaps we can refer to the legal counsel and say what is an average initial consultation? I know that varies, depending on –

MS. HAWLEY GEORGE: Yes, it depends on the matter. It absolutely does, yes.

MS. COFFIN: – the incident, right. Okay. I'm just thinking, trying to go at this a slightly different way.

MS. HAWLEY GEORGE: I don't have anything else to say other than.

MS. COFFIN: Okay, fair enough.

MS. HAWLEY GEORGE: (Inaudible) really it depends. I can't really speak to it. It depends on whatever it is (inaudible).

MS. COFFIN: Yes, okay.

MR. SPEAKER: Okay.

Dr. Haggie.

MR. HAGGIE: Yes, I get where my colleague is going, but I think one is a proxy for the other because you pay by the hour. I think the concept was – and maybe the way to frame it is the idea is that someone should not be financially disadvantaged as a result of having to seek legal advice in this particular circumstance.

I think if you put some kind of bar or yardstick on it then suddenly a conversation that could take an hour, hour and a half, might take four. I'm not trying to cast aspersions, but in my previous career I have seen things creep up to

where a recommended ceiling becomes the automatic default.

MR. SPEAKER: Okay.

MHA Petten.

MR. PETTEN: Yes, thank you.

Just one quick point to what Minister Haggie said, too. It deals with the complexity of the case. They're putting dollars and hours on a case; every case is different. One may only be half an hour. You go in and an hour minimum, you go on again. Some others could be – complexities – I think it's a job for us again. I strongly believe we need to leave that to do a consultation on.

MR. SPEAKER: Any other comments on this before –

MS. RUSSELL: (Inaudible) suggest the changes?

MR. SPEAKER: Okay. Do we have a suggested change?

MS. RUSSELL: Yes. So you can just (inaudible) part at the bottom, but you can just read out this and then –

MR. SPEAKER: Okay.

MS. RUSSELL: – two changes.

MR. SPEAKER: So, legal fee. Okay.

Pursuant to subparagraph 20(6)(b)(ii) of the *House of Assembly Accountability, Integrity and Administration Act*, the Commission approves the guidelines on reimbursement of legal fees for Members of the House of Assembly presented in attachment 1 with the following changes: from end of section 3 to end of section 4.

MS. COADY: Sorry; where can we refer to that?

MS. RUSSELL: I just drafted that based on the changes you (inaudible).

MS. COADY: Oh.

MR. SPEAKER: Section 3 to section 4.

MS. RUSSELL: We were talking about the clause at the end of section 3 that gives the discretionary for the Management Commission.

MS. COADY: Okay.

CLERK: Provide discretionary authority to section 4.

MS. COADY: Okay.

MR. SPEAKER: Is that instead of the current section, or?

MS. RUSSELL: No, it's adding it at the end of section 4.

CLERK: It will add discretionary authority to section 4.

MR. SPEAKER: It does not set exact amount for financial assistance for initial legal consultation.

MS. RUSSELL: Yes, so there's no exact amount.

MR. SPEAKER: Okay, and that's added on page 1 of the guidelines.

MS. RUSSELL: No. That will taken out of page 2.

MR. SPEAKER: Page 2, okay.

MS. COADY: I thought I heard you starting to say something about making amendments to the House of Assembly Integrity act?

MR. RUSSELL: No, he was stating the authority for the Management Commission making the policy.

MR. SPEAKER: Yes, okay.

MS. COADY: Okay, thank you.

Okay, so just amending the policy –

MR. SPEAKER: So that's the overall –

MS. COADY: I didn't hear – unintended consequences to happen here.

Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Yes. So that's the overall bit of the motion to accept what we have here –

MR. RUSSELL: Precise wording: to establish.

MR. SPEAKER: – with the amendments, yes.

MS. RUSSELL: Yes.

MR. SPEAKER: Everyone is fine with it?

So we need someone to move that motion and a seconder.

MR. HAGGIE: So moved.

MR. SPEAKER: I think Dr. Haggie and Mr. Loveless, I think. Two at the same time there.

So we'll have a vote on that then.

All those in favour, 'aye.'

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

MR. SPEAKER: All those against, 'nay.'

Carried.

Next we have a request from our friends in the Press Gallery Association regarding broadcasting of House of Assembly Committee proceedings.

“On May 27, 2019 the former Speaker received a request from the House of Assembly Press Gallery Association regarding consideration of broadcasting of Committee proceedings” Which is provided at Tab 5 of the briefing package. I think you all have that.

“The Association is requesting that consideration be given to full broadcasting of public Committee proceedings (TV broadcast via HOA channel and webcast via HOA website); or at a minimum, that consideration be given to having a webcast available on the HOA website.

“The Standing Orders provide for House of Assembly Committees to meet *in-camera* should it be considered necessary by the Committee. **Any request for broadcast/webcast Committee proceedings would apply to public meetings only.**”

So the current practice of the House of Assembly with respect to *Hansard* and audio for public Committee meetings as summarized in the Briefing Note which has been provided to Members of the Commission.

Some of the considerations: With its current staff complement, the House of Assembly broadcasting – I think they have three, four people down there.

CLERK: We have three people for Broadcast, and then one person does all the chyrons and the text.

MR. SPEAKER: Yeah.

With the current staff complement, the House of Assembly broadcasting service is capable of broadcasting/webcasting occasional non-concurrent public meetings held in either the Chamber or the Committee Room. So either, but they have trouble with two meetings happening at the same time.

CLERK: We can't do two meetings at the same time.

MS. RUSSELL: Not with the current staff.

MR. SPEAKER: Not with the current staff.

MS. RUSSELL: With extra staff.

MR. SPEAKER: So if there were public Committee meetings held over multiple successive days when the House is in session – for example, which is common in the Estimates Committee meetings during budget process – additional staff resources would be required to broadcast or webcast.

The cost/resources analysis in the table on page 2 of the Briefing Note includes broadcast/webcast non-concurrent meetings from Chamber or Committee Rooms only. Broadcasting from other locations require

additional costs. For example, if a Committee went on the road, travelled around, that would be additional costs.

Before I open the floor for comments and discussions, I'll summarize – well, I'll turn it over to the policy and communications officer to summarize some of the options we have here.

MS. RUSSELL: So the three options available to the Management Commission are summarized on the top of page 3 on the Briefing Note. Essentially, the direction would be to direct TV broadcast and webcast – and then, of course, the Commission would have to provide direction as to whether it wished to have closed captioning or not of those proceedings – a webcast only – and again, with or without closed captioning, you would need to provide direction on that – or to continue with the current practice for public meetings.

The current practice is that the audio feed is streamed live on the website and is available; it's archived. And there's *Hansard* for all public Committee meetings. Those are the three options available, and, of course, the cost analysis is in the table on page 2.

MR. SPEAKER: Okay.

Dr. Haggie.

MR. HAGGIE: Thank you.

What's our financial state? Given that everything except current practice will be an increase in expenditure, how are we placed to bear any or all of the costs? They're incremental costs. Is there leeway to do one but not all, or is there leeway to do nothing, or is there leeway to do everything?

CLERK: The Legislature has worked on a zero-based budget policy since 2007. We've never had resourcing to do any Committee work. So anything we do, including the resolution that was passed today, will require additional resources and additional funds. We can't absorb within the current allocations.

MR. HAGGIE: If I could just come back on that. Because the other thing is from an equity point of view, if we were to do anything beyond

current practice it would have to, as a minimum, include closed captioning. You couldn't just webcast and not, or TV and not. I think that would be where my concern would be, is that you can't realistically just add in webcasting and not anything else.

The options one and two, if we were going down those routes, you cannot not put closed captioning on there because that disadvantages a significant group of individuals.

MR. SPEAKER: Do we currently closed caption everything?

CLERK: No. At present, we have funding to closed caption routine proceedings and we also do special proceedings such as the Budget Speech and the Throne Speech. Of course, Management Commissions, by law, in the statute, have to be treated the same way as the General Assembly proceedings. So the Management Commission is closed captioning.

After routine proceedings, we shut down closed captioning and the rest of the debate is voice only and then, of course, *Hansard* is available that evening or the following day.

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for Conception Bay East - Bell Island

MR. BRAZIL: Is this the standard in other Legislatures across the country?

AN HON. MEMBER: (Inaudible.)

MR. BRAZIL: From a costing, are we in line with the same costing? Because we have minimal providers here, is it more expensive in Newfoundland and Labrador?

MS. RUSSELL: We didn't do a jurisdictional scan on the cost. We did a jurisdictional scan to see who was broadcasting or webcasting, but we didn't get into that level of analysis on the jurisdictional scan.

CLERK: If I may, from a cost perspective, we have a contract for the webcasting services and it's a fixed cost based on how we currently provide it and, of course, we have our staffing costs.

With respect to the general broadcast, there are a couple of things. One is that the fibre signal is picked up by some of the cable companies. None of the service providers are obligated to provide the House of Assembly broadcast. It's at their discretion.

So we provide the signal in two ways. One is by fibre, which is picked up by some providers, and then a number of them pick up the satellite feed, and that is a contract. We tender for that every three years. The current cost of that is about \$500 an hour.

Minister Coady knows this because I'm always over saying: How long are we going to go? I need to –

MS. COADY: (Inaudible.)

CLERK: So we currently pay \$500 an hour for every hour. Once we book time, we have to pay for it, but we have paid as much as almost \$675, \$695 because it depends on what the responses to the tender are.

MR. SPEAKER: Minister Coady.

MS. COADY: Thank you very much.

I completely support broadcast. I think it's important. I'm just concerned about cost. I think, even in reviewing, the Press Gallery Association recognizes that maybe in the first instance we'll see how we can get along with webcast. It's not the most ideal, but I think it's the most cost effective that we can do at this point in time. We probably need to consider how do we get closed captioning or what portions thereof are required for closed captioning. I think that is the real decision from my perspective.

MR. SPEAKER: Yeah, I think we have a couple of trends that are happening here as well that we need to keep in mind as we have this discussion. I think if you look at the way things are going in terms of broadcast and webcasting, I think you're seeing more and more material being available webcasted.

I think the other trend we're seeing here in our House is we're seeing more and more activity within our Committees as well. So we're looking at an increase, I think, in the number of

Committee meetings that we're going to have and the number of things that we're going to be dealing with in Committees. I personally think that's a great sort of thing. So we're going to see more of a need for these sort of things.

I just wanted to make those points as we're debating this.

Member Brazil.

MR. BRAZIL: I concur there, too, particularly from a financial point of view, and to see what the uptake is. The webcast is perhaps the most efficient way to do it. I agree with MHA Haggie, too; I think closed captioning is a no-brainer now, it has to be. It's part and parcel of a service that needs to be provided and we have to find it.

How hard would it be to get a financial breakdown? I, obviously, suspect, and I know it's there, do you have a better understanding of how often Committees meet and the normal time frames and what the costing would be? Is that available?

MS. RUSSELL: The last bullet in the briefing note, actually, it talks about – so once the Commission provides direction here this evening, there will be a budget submission prepared, based on the direction, and those estimates will be brought forward for the Commission during the budget process to review and consider at that time. So we do some more analysis and try to make up some estimates based on previous Committee meetings and the various costs associated.

MR. SPEAKER: MHA Petten.

MR. PETTEN: Thank you.

But there was no actual cost analysis done based on last year. Were there any actual estimates based on what we did in Estimates and other Committees to get an idea of what the cost is? Was that done? It's not in here. I know we have a figure there, but we don't have the bottom-line figure. That makes it easier for me, personally, if you're looking dollars and cents.

CLERK: We've got some numbers.

MS. RUSSELL: We do have some numbers.

So in terms of the number of hours of Committee meetings, in the 1st session of the 49th General Assembly – so that’s the current session so far – the Estimates Committees took 42 hours, and the other Committees, public meetings of Committees, were three. So that’s for a total of 47 hours.

In the 3rd session of the 48th General Assembly, the Estimates Committees came in at 39 hours, and other public meetings of Committees came in at seven. So other would be the Public Accounts Committee or Government Services. So that was 46.

So it’s been pretty consistent between 47, 46, 48 over the last number of sessions. That’s with the current level of Committee business.

CLERK: We really haven’t had an active Committee system like they do in other Legislatures. So we don’t have a whole lot that we can draw from. With today’s resolution on democratic reform, how often is that Committee going to meet? Are they going to be public sessions?

MS. RUSSELL: On the road, webcasting from another location could require additional costs, additional staff resources.

CLERK: Even if a Committee travels and it meets in public, at the minimum, we do have to do *Hansard*. So there’s a cost there, apart from remote broadcast. So that’s all numbers we’ll have to grapple with.

Same thing, depending if there’s more legislation referred to Committee and they have public meetings that will require resources.

None of this is reflected in the numbers there. Basically, what you’re seeing there are the Estimates Committee meetings which happen over a two- to three-week period every April and May, and you’re seeing some public meetings of the Public Accounts Committee.

MS. RUSSELL: Government Services Committee did have some public hearings when they considered the *Real Estate Trading Act*.

MR. SPEAKER: Yeah.

I guess one of the concerns is the successive meetings. When we have the Estimates Committee, we’re under a time frame. Is there a minimum or a maximum numbers of hours related to the –?

CLERK: Well, it has to be done over a 15-day period, 15-sitting day period. Of course, when the House happens to be sitting – now, Estimates cannot meet when the House is sitting. Other Committees, but Committees cannot hear the Estimates when the House is sitting. That’s in the Standing Orders.

The bottom line is with the three staff and having Estimates in the morning and then the House in the afternoon and then Estimates in the evening and that happens over repeated days, you’re going to need more than those three staff, plus the person who does – we have a person who works part-time, works sessional with the Broadcast Centre that does the chyrons when the House is sitting, so we would have to look at that.

MR. SPEAKER: Yeah.

MHA Loveless.

MR. LOVELESS: Just trying to wrap my mind around it. Let’s be clear here that it’s the press gallery that is requesting this, correct? We’ve talked about costs. I’ll say the same thing, cost is a concern for me as well, but do we have any viewer rates? Do we know how many people are viewing this? Because that’s a big piece of information that if we’re going to consider costs and we have three people that watch four or five meetings, then this is about efficiency here, too.

I’m just putting it on the record. I’m concerned for the cost, but I wouldn’t mind having some data.

CLERK: There’s absolutely no way of getting that data.

MR. LOVELESS: No.

MR. SPEAKER: Maybe the number of views we get on a website? Is that –?

CLERK: I’ve asked a couple of times during certain debates, and you might have a couple

hundred watching it at different times. We can ask.

Now, that's the proceedings of the House; this is proceedings of Committees, so we have no track record with that at all.

MR. LOVELESS: Yeah.

MR. SPEAKER: Yeah.

MR. HAGGIE: You don't see many people in the public galleries during Estimates.

MR. SPEAKER: No.

CLERK: Every now and again we get a couple after Question Period.

MR. SPEAKER: Yeah.

CLERK: The bottom line is that we don't see people in the public gallery now, of course, because the House is broadcasted, right?

MR. SPEAKER: Yeah, just anecdotally, I guess, I talk to people who say they tune into the House of Assembly all the time, they listen. I'm surprised, sometimes, the number of people who tell me they actually watch the House of Assembly.

MR. HAGGIE: They're all spouses.

CLERK: I know we have one faithful listener, and if the signal goes down, we get a call.

AN HON. MEMBER: Really?

CLERK: Yes.

MR. SPEAKER: Okay.

MS. COFFIN: There are people watching. It's not just people in our offices.

I think one of the larger things that we're looking at here is also transparency and accountability as well. So maybe one of the things we can talk about is does that need to be live, or is it something that we can capture and then put up after the meetings have happened. That's just a minor semantics there. But the larger principle is transparency and

accountability. So I think we need to kind of temper cost and our responsibility to the public in our discussions and making sure that everyone has access to that. So I think that's an important point to consider here.

MR. SPEAKER: Yes, and the requests are coming from the media, right, and they take what we say and do in these Committees and they disseminate it to a broader audience, then, I guess. So we're providing a service to the media, as well as the public, and to the public through the media, who are making the request.

So I don't know where – do we want to have some more discussion?

Minister Coady.

MS. COADY: I'm just waiting for my mic to come on, sorry, guys.

MR. SPEAKER: Okay.

MS. COADY: Thank you.

But I noted in the decision note there, or the note that you sent, that for webcast only, there would be no real additional costs, right? So there'd be –

AN HON. MEMBER: Closed captioning.

MS. COADY: – it's only the closed captioning.

AN HON. MEMBER: And staff.

MS. COADY: And possibly, possibly staff, if we have two locations or something of that nature. So it's pretty cost-effective to do the webcast, if nothing else. We can determine from there what other services may or may not be required as we move through this.

So I'm suggesting that we go that route first. The question is around the closed captioning and how much of that we can do, and then we might need guidelines around that, but we can start small and move.

MR. SPEAKER: Okay.

Do we want to make a motion on this to –?

MS. COADY: The only thing about a motion is (inaudible).

MS. RUSSELL: So you don't want to make a specific direction right now with respect to closed captioning, just direction on the webcast, and then at a later time determine the direction with respect to closed captioning and whether (inaudible).

MS. COADY: My suggestion is I don't think we have enough information on the closed captioning at this point, in terms of what can or can't be done from a budget perspective. I'm hearing you have no budget and we have no way of getting a budget until the next budget. I guess we'll make that determination as we move through, but I think we should move forward on the webcasting anyway. That's my perspective.

CLERK: Maybe the direction is that we bring forward cost assumptions associated with webcasting, with and without closed captioning, for consideration during the budget process. Would that work?

MS. COADY: Yeah.

MR. SPEAKER: MHA Petten has a point.

MR. PETTEN: Yeah, thank you.

I have no problem with going with the webcasting as a starting point, but to Minister Haggie's point earlier, I don't really know, if we're going with webcasting, how we cannot – and I know you're talking budgetary – go closed captioning.

There has been lots of debate over the support for people who are deaf or hard of hearing and we're going to go now and start webcasting and we're not going to have closed captioning. That's a non-starter to me. I don't think we can do one without the other, personally speaking. I think it's kind of insulting to that group of people to not do it. I know it's budgetary, but I personally feel strongly. That wouldn't be a wise decision.

CLERK: I suggested that possibly the motion would be we bring forward cost assumptions to webcast with and without closed captioning for consideration during the budget process.

MS. RUSSELL: He's got the draft motion to read out here right now.

MR. SPEAKER: I'll read this out.

The Commission directs webcast only for non-concurrent public meetings of the House of Assembly Committee processes, held in either the Chamber or Committee Room, with related budget submissions to be brought forward to the Commission for consideration during the 2020-2021 budget process with analysis with and without closed captioning.

MS. RUSSELL: You directed webcast and the budget submission is going to –

CLERK: No, that's not quite it. What I understood it to be is that the Commission wants to see estimates around the webcast option with closed captioning and without closed captioning to be brought forward into the budget process before making a final decision on this matter.

MR. SPEAKER: Okay.

MS. RUSSELL: I thought they were directing the webcast and then the closed captioning decisions will be made later.

CLERK: No.

MS. RUSSELL: No, I got that part. Sorry.

MR. SPEAKER: Okay, so I think I can do a motion.

The motion, if I have the sense properly, is to ask the staff to provide estimates as to cost before moving forward with webcasting or closed captioning.

Is that clear? No?

MHA Coffin.

MS. COFFIN: Thank you.

It is clear. I was just wondering is there a mechanism – this means that if we bring those costs forward, these estimates forward, to be incorporated into the budget process, that means that this will not begin until after that process has made its way through and those costs have

been incorporated into the budget. We can't start webcasting right now at all. There's no way we can do that until we get some sense of cost.

I just want to make sure that that's exactly where we are going. So there's going to be a delay on this no matter what.

CLERK: We still provide the *Hansard* and we still provide audio.

MS. COFFIN: Yes.

CLERK: That's live. The audio is live.

MS. COFFIN: Okay, good.

MR. SPEAKER: When is our next meeting scheduled? I'm just thinking timelines here.

CLERK: We have some personnel issues, so we're going to be looking to the Commission to have another meeting sooner rather than later. These are outstanding for quite some time. It was some organizational decisions that were taken around a couple of the statutory offices. So we just need to complete that process.

MR. SPEAKER: I guess I'm asking about timelines and estimates.

MS. RUSSELL: That will go in the budget.

CLERK: That will have to go in the budget.

MS. RUSSELL: Separately.

MR. SPEAKER: Okay.

To MHA Coffin's comment, based on the information we have here, there doesn't seem to be much additional cost to doing webcasting just from the House Chamber and the Committee Room.

CLERK: But the Commission hasn't given its direction yet. It's given its preferred approach, but it wants to see the cost estimate –

MR. SPEAKER: Okay.

CLERK: – as part of the budget process before it makes its final decision. Am I interpreting that correctly?

AN HON. MEMBER: (Inaudible.)

CLERK: That's my understanding.

MS. COFFIN: Unless there's a mechanism for us to flick a switch and say there's no cost associated with us doing extra broadcasting – and that's not the impression that I'm getting; we have budget implications no matter what we do – then that is the right approach.

CLERK: Yeah.

MR. SPEAKER: Okay.

The motion, someone want to see if they can another go at moving that motion?

The Clerk.

CLERK: The Commission directed that cost estimates be developed for a webcast only, with and without closed captioning, and brought forward to the budget process for final consideration and direction.

MR. SPEAKER: Okay.

Someone on the Commission here has to move that.

Moved by MHA Coffin.

Did you want to speak to –?

MR. LOVELESS: When you say budgetary process, but with that information, we're coming back in this form again to discuss it, correct?

CLERK: When you make your budget decisions, you will make a decision on that –

MR. LOVELESS: Right. We'll have that information at that time, yeah.

CLERK: Exactly.

MR. SPEAKER: So our decision is to be submitted to the budget process?

CLERK: Yes.

MR. SPEAKER: Okay, for the House of Assembly. Yeah, just so we're clear.

We're ready to vote.

It was moved by MHA Coffin; we need a seconder.

Dr. Haggie is seconder.

All those in favour, 'aye.'

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

MR. SPEAKER: All those against, 'nay.'

Carried.

I don't think we have any other items on our agenda, so we need a motion to adjourn.

Dr. Haggie moved the motion; seconded very quickly by MHA Coffin.

All those in favour of adjournment, 'aye.'

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

MR. SPEAKER: All those against, 'nay.'

Passed.

This meeting is adjourned.

On motion, meeting adjourned.