



PROVINCE OF NEWFOUNDLAND AND LABRADOR  
HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY

HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY  
MANAGEMENT COMMISSION

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Eighty-seventh Meeting

Thursday, November 24, 2022

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**HANSARD**

Speaker: Honourable Derek Bennett, MHA

The Management Commission met at 12:20 p.m. in the House of Assembly.

**SPEAKER (Bennett):** Okay, good afternoon everyone and welcome to our meeting this afternoon.

Minister Crocker is joining in by phone.

Can you hear us okay?

Minister Crocker, can you hear okay?

**S. CROCKER:** Yes, I can.

**SPEAKER:** Okay, thank you very much.

Before we start the meeting, I would just like to introduce Members of the Management Commission and staff that are present here today with us.

First of all, as previously mentioned, calling in by telephone, the hon. Steve Crocker, Government House Leader. Also, we have Barry Petten, Opposition House Leader; the hon. Lisa Dempster, Member for Cartwright - L'Anse au Clair; Lela Evans, Member for Torngat Mountains; Craig Pardy, Member for Bonavista; Paul Pike, Member for Burin - Grand Bank. Our staff today, we have Sandra Barnes, Clerk and Secretary to the Commission; Kim Hawley George, Law Clerk and Acting Clerk Assistant; and Bobbi Russell, Policy and Communications Officer.

Before we get started with the first agenda item for today's meeting, as required under the *House of Assembly Accountability, Integrity and Administration Act*, I wish to report discussions taken at in camera meetings. In today's briefing materials, draft minute notes to the substance of discussions taken in the in camera meetings for the following dates: June 14, June 21, June 24, July 6, August 17, October 3, October 17 and October 19, 2022. For the information of the public, the minutes of these in camera meetings will be posted on

the House of Assembly website following today's approval.

So the first agenda item on your agenda is for the approval of the minutes. Included in today's briefing materials are draft minutes of the meetings held on the following dates, the ones I just previously mentioned, which were: June 14, June 21, June 24, July 6, August 17, October 3, October 17 and October 19, 2022.

Are there any questions or comments before we call for a motion?

Hearing none, I'll ask for someone to move the motion.

MHA Petten; seconded by Minister Dempster.

All those in favour, 'aye.'

Minister Crocker, how do you vote?

**S. CROCKER:** In favour.

**SPEAKER:** In favour.

Motion carried.

On motion, minutes adopted as circulated.

**SPEAKER:** Item number 2(a), the Speaker's report: The process for rulings on allowance use is outlined in Section 24 of the *House of Assembly Accountability, Integrity and Administration Act*. The act gives authority for the Speaker to make rulings when expenditures of Members have been rejected for payment, provided that the ruling is distributed to and received concurrence from the Management Commission. Any rulings under these provisions must be reported at a public meeting.

The report is dealing with all such rulings for the period ending November 4, 2022, and been circulated to the Commission in today's briefing package. It's posted on the

House of Assembly website with materials for today's meeting.

This item is for reporting purposes only. But before we move on, are there any questions that Members may have?

**CLERK (Barnes):** Can you just note that the district is wrong for MHA Evans, but it has been corrected on the posted materials.

**SPEAKER:** Thank you, Sandra.

As noted, there was a mistake on the reporting. It does identify the District of Lake Melville and it should be Torngat Mountains. So that has been fixed on the briefing materials now and it also will be fixed on our website.

Again, if there are any questions from Committee Members?

Seeing none, we'll move on to item 2(b), the Clerk's report. The Standard Office Allocation Package for Members and constituency assistants delegates authority for the Clerk to preapprove expenditures for furniture and equipment to a maximum of \$1,000 per unit, with the Clerk to report all such approvals at a subsequent meeting of the Management Commission.

The report included in today's briefing package details the approvals of the Clerk under this provision up to November 4, 2022. This item is also for reporting purposes but I will ask if there are any questions or comments from the Committee again.

MHA Petten.

**B. PETTEN:** So just to be clear – I'm following from my phone – we're dealing with a loveseat for a constituency office, is that correct?

**SPEAKER:** Correct.

**B. PETTEN:** Is that the only issue on this?

**SPEAKER:** That's the only item that this ruling would be applied to.

**B. PETTEN:** Is that a normal expense?

**SPEAKER:** Clerk?

**CLERK:** Members have requested different types of furniture in their offices over the years. For example, some have asked for chairs with no arms or, in this case, to accommodate various constituents that regularly come to the offices.

**B. PETTEN:** Okay.

Is the loveseat designed – I mean, I know that I've got my own constituency office. It's basically standard equipment that you deal with, your tables and chairs, your meeting desk or out in your waiting area, chairs for what have you. But a loveseat seems to be – I don't know what's the proper word – a bit of a stretch. When I see it there, it just kind of jumps out at me is all, and I wonder if that's not a normal thing. There are not many constituency offices you go in and see couches and loveseats.

In his case here we're dealing with the minister, you have a ministerial suite anyway. So when you're dealing with constituency issues, they're usually in and out or they're coming to meet with you and going again. I just wonder what the purpose or the necessity, I guess, of having a loveseat in your constituency office is.

**L. DEMPSTER:** This would've been for her constituency office. So that would be –

**CLERK:** In her district.

**L. DEMPSTER:** Yes.

**B. PETTEN:** That's what I mean.

**L. DEMPSTER:** Yes, so her ministerial office would be in here and that would be in St. Anthony. I wasn't sure if you understood that.

**SPEAKER:** And it might be for –

**B. PETTEN:** I totally understand that.

**SPEAKER:** – different person’s abilities and disabilities and that too. A special request was asked and we thought it was appropriate because of the request.

**CLERK:** Exactly.

**B. PETTEN:** No, fair enough. It just jumped out at me, that’s all.

**S. CROCKER:** If I can just chime in for a second to follow up on MHA Petten. I’m fine with it, don’t take this wrong, if there’s a need for it. Do we not have a prescribed list of what furniture is in our constituency offices?

**CLERK:** Yes, we do. There is a standard office allocation. If Members need furniture or equipment beyond that, they can certainly write and ask for it. It’s not uncommon to provide an extra table, some extra chairs of a different type. Filing cabinets is a very common one. Those sorts of things.

As I said, sometimes the Members have come forward because they have constituents that have various physical needs and they’re doing their best to accommodate them in the office.

**SPEAKER:** Minister Dempster.

**L. DEMPSTER:** I wasn’t –

**S. CROCKER:** Fair enough.

**SPEAKER:** Oh, sorry.

Do you have a follow-up question there, Minister Crocker?

**S. CROCKER:** No, I just said thanks for the explanation.

**SPEAKER:** Okay, thank you.

Minister Dempster.

**L. DEMPSTER:** I’m just going to share something without disclosing any privacy, because it’s interesting that this request came in. I just spent two days last week at a biennial and one particular individual that I was sitting with – so there were tables; the harvesters were at tables and we were along by the wall on these chairs, and someone had to leave a couple of times and go down and sit on a sofa because they had back and hip issues and couldn’t sit on the hard chair. It may be something related, I don’t know. I guess we can’t presuppose the reason.

**CLERK:** It was approved because the request was to accommodate a constituent’s needs.

**L. DEMPSTER:** Oh, there you go.

**SPEAKER:** MHA Evans.

**L. EVANS:** Yes, that’s what I was wondering. Usually when it’s outside the list, an MHA or whoever would include a rationale for the justification for an outside expense. So that was to accommodate somebody?

**SPEAKER:** Correct.

**CLERK:** Yes.

**SPEAKER:** Appropriate rationale was provided before a decision was made.

Any further questions or comments before we move on to item 2(c)?

Seeing none, the next agenda item is also a reporting to the Commission. The *House of Assembly Accountability, Integrity and Administration Act* state 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.”

The financial reports and members' expense reports are included in today's briefing package for the periods of April 1, 2022, to June 30, 2022, and also April 1, 2022, to September 30, 2022. Again, there are no decisions required, but I'll put it open if any Committee Members have any questions.

Hearing and seeing none, I will move on to agenda item 2(d), Budget Transfers. The next item is also reporting purposes only. The House of Assembly Transfer of Funds Policy requires that only certain budget transfers to be approved by the Commission, but requires all transfers of funds processed during the fiscal year be reported to the Commission for transparency purposes.

In accordance with the policy, all budget transfers processed during the fiscal year ending 31st March, 2022 are included in the briefing package. Again, this is only for reporting purposes, but I will open the floor for any questions or comments from Committee Members.

MHA Petten.

**B. PETTEN:** Yes, (inaudible) I'm looking at a separate block there; I'm assuming it's in the same note, Professional Services. So is this all to do with the same fee for Mr. Green?

I may be reading this wrong. I'm going from my phone unfortunately. I'm just clarifying. I think I have it – yeah, that block, that's where the \$101,000 comes from in all those – that's the breakdown of all those –?

**CLERK:** So far in this fiscal year, most of the Professional Services money has gone to cover the cost of former Chief Justice Green's review.

**B. PETTEN:** Yes.

**CLERK:** We also had to pay for the review we had done – the House ordered a review

of the conflict of interest, they asked to get somebody external to review the report filed by the Commissioner for Legislative Standards. So there was about \$5,700 went to cover that review as well.

**SPEAKER:** Any further questions?

Seeing none, we will move on to item 2(e), Caucus Operational Funding Reports.

The Caucus Operational Funding Grants Policy requires each caucus, the Office of the Speaker and unaffiliated Members to submit to the Management Commission a report detailing expenditures on the use of this allocation within 90 days of the end of the fiscal year.

In accordance with the policy, reports detailing expenditures for the period of April 1, 2021, to March 31, 2022, have been received and are included in the briefing package.

Again, another item for reporting purposes, but we'll open the floor for questions.

Hearing or seeing no questions or comments, we'll move on to item 2(f), Audit Committee Report.

In accordance with the provisions of the *House of Assembly Accountability, Integrity and Administration Act*, the House of Assembly Audit Committee is required to report to the Management Commission regularly with respect to its activities. Included in today's briefing package is a report detailing the activities of the Audit Committee for the 2020-2021 year and also the 2021-2022 fiscal year.

This item is, again, for reporting purposes and no decisions are required.

But before I move on, I will ask the Chair of the Audit Committee, the Member for Burin - Grand Bank, if he wishes to make any comments or anything.

**P. PIKE:** No, just that if everybody has a copy of it there, the only findings and decisions of the Audit Committee – consolidate decisions, I should say – for the reporting periods as indicated are listed in your package. I guess, the Committee approved the final audit financial information, the management certification for March 31, 2020, and recommended them to the Management Commission.

The Committee approved audited statements for March 31, 2021, and recommended them to the Management Commission.

The Committee recommended that the Management Commission consider an amendment to the Caucus Operational Funding Grants Policy to require that monthly bank reconciliations and supporting documentation for expenditures be submitted to the Audit Committee on a quarterly basis in the aggregate by each caucus and by the Speaker and unaffiliated Members.

We recommended review of the Caucus Operational Funding Grants Policy for clarification and revision, if there's any required. One of those was with respect to the purchasing of alcohol.

The Committee directed the Chair to send correspondence to all Members on its behalf to remind them of the responsibilities under the policy and to underscore the importance of the accountability mechanism.

We recommended that the Management Commission remind Members of the importance of timely invoices, particularly considering the impact of delay on smaller businesses and so on. I think that's been done quite effectively. I'm quite pleased with the results.

We recommended that the Management Commission consider issuing a directive substantially along the lines of the following:

That where outstanding invoices are not approved by Members within 30 days – and most of those are listed – any further purchase orders for those Members shall be withheld until outstanding invoices past 30 days are approved in the financial system. We had to do something there.

We recommended the Auditor General as the auditor for the House of Assembly and statutory officers for the fiscal year ending March.

The Committee directed a memo be prepared for distribution to Members of the House of Assembly and political support employees, reminding them of the importance of a strict adherence to the requirements and timelines established under the statute or policy. In particular, the Committee directed that the memo require strict attention to the submission of fiscal year expenses, approval of annual inventory listing, approval of outstanding invoices and submission of biweekly attendance. The Committee further directed that the memo be distributed to align with the beginning of the new fiscal year. We've had a lot of success with this one as well.

So thank you. If there are any questions.

**SPEAKER:** Thank you.

Are there any questions to the Chair, MHA Pike?

MHA Pardy.

**C. PARDY:** Thank you, Speaker.

I noticed that on the self-assessment on the Appendix on the Committee that they were all rather sterling; they strongly agreed on all of them, except for the agenda and related information being provided in ample time to do ample study.

**P. PIKE:** Yes.

**C. PARDY:** I'm assuming that would have been addressed too, would it not?

**P. PIKE:** Yes, it would.

**C. PARDY:** Yeah.

**P. PIKE:** Point well taken on that.

**C. PARDY:** The Committee should be commended.

**P. PIKE:** Thank you.

We try and we work very hard.

**SPEAKER:** Thank you, MHA Pike.

Are there any further questions before we move on to the next agenda item?

Seeing and hearing none, we'll move on to item 3, the Audit Committee Appointment. This is also related to the Audit Committee, as there's an appointment to the Committee required in accordance with the *House of Assembly Accountability, Integrity and Administration Act*.

The act requires the Committee to consist of two members of the Commission chosen by the Commission, at least one of whom shall not be a member of the government party; and then two members, chosen by the Chief Justice of the province, who are not members but who are residents of the province, and have demonstrated knowledge and experience in financial matters and are suitable to represent the public interest.

The two public members currently serving the Audit Committee are Beverley Evans and Deborah Collis. The Chair, as appointed by the Commission, is the Member for Burin - Grand Bank.

As a result of the recent changes in the composition of the Management Commission, there's currently a vacancy on the Audit Committee requiring the

Commission to appoint one of its Opposition Members to serve on the Committee.

Are there any questions before I call for nominations first?

Hearing and seeing none, I'll call for nomination for the Member.

MHA Petten.

**B. PETTEN:** I nominate MHA Craig Pardy.

**SPEAKER:** MHA Pardy.

Are there any further nominations for the appointment of the Committee Member?

Seeing none, pursuant to paragraph 23(2)(a) of the *House of Assembly Accountability, Integrity and Administration Act*, the Commission appoints the Member for Bonavista as the Member for the House of Assembly Audit Committee effective immediately.

Thank you, Sir.

Can I get a mover to that motion? Barry.

And a seconder? MHA Pike.

All those in favour, 'aye.'

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Aye.

**SPEAKER:** Minister Crocker, how do you vote?

**S. CROCKER:** In favour.

**SPEAKER:** In favour, thank you.

Motion carried.

The last item on the agenda deals with a budget transfer which has already been approved by the Management Commission in accordance with the provisions for an urgent transfer when a meeting of the Commission cannot be scheduled in a

timely manner but now requires ratification in accordance with the policy. The details of the budget transfer are outlined in the briefing package for today's meeting.

Are there any questions or comments before I call for the motion?

Seeing none, I'll ask for someone to move the motion that the Commission ratifies transfers of funds HOABT2022-004 in accordance with section 5 of the House of Assembly Transfer of Funds Policy. Can I have a mover? MHA Pardy.

Secunder: Minister Dempster.

All those in favour, 'aye.'

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Aye.

**SPEAKER:** Minister Crocker, how do you vote?

**S. CROCKER:** In favour.

**SPEAKER:** In favour.

Motion carried.

This closes the agenda items for today. I'll call for a motion for adjournment.

MHA Petten.

All those in favour, 'aye.'

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Aye.

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

Motion carried.

On motion, meeting adjourned.