

House of Assembly
Newfoundland & Labrador



Colonial Building
1850-1959

Confederation Building
1960-present



2021-22 ***Annual Performance Report***

House of Assembly Service





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I am pleased to present the 2021-22 Annual Performance Report of the House of Assembly Service (HOAS). This report outlines the accomplishments of the HOAS toward the objectives for the reporting period as identified in the 2020-23 Activity Plan.

The HOAS was established by statute in the *House of Assembly Accountability, Integrity and Administration Act* to support the functioning of the House of Assembly and its Committees, the Management Commission and Members of the House of Assembly.

This report was prepared under my direction in accordance with the *Transparency and Accountability Act* for a Category 3 entity. As the Speaker, I am accountable for the actual results reported in this document.

Hon. Derek Bennett, MHA
Speaker of the House of Assembly



OVERVIEW

The House of Assembly Service (HOAS) was established by statute in the *House of Assembly Accountability, Integrity and Administration Act* to support the functioning of the House of Assembly and its Committees, the House of Assembly Management Commission and Members of the House of Assembly.

As of March 31, 2022, the House of Assembly Service had 41 employees. This includes permanent, sessional and temporary employees in Office of the Speaker, Office of the Clerk, Corporate and Members' Services Division and Information Management Division.

The Speaker is the impartial presiding officer of the House, the guardian of its rights and privileges, and is Chair of the House of Assembly Management Commission. The Office of the Speaker provides support to the Speaker in carrying out these duties and responsibilities.

The Clerk is the non-partisan, chief permanent officer of the House whose duties can be divided into two main areas: Chief Parliamentary Advisor and Chief Administrative Officer. The Office of the Clerk supports the activities of the Clerk in these two main areas, which include the following:

- parliamentary and procedural advice and support to the Speaker, other presiding officers and Members of the House;
- support services to all Standing and Select Committees of the House;
- policy and administrative support to the Management Commission;
- legal services;
- strategic communications and policy support;
- visitor services and outreach;
- security services (parliamentary precinct only); and
- ceremonial and special event planning and coordination.

The Corporate and Members' Services Division provides services in accounts payable, financial planning and reporting, general operations and purchasing, and human resources services and payroll administration.

The Information Management Division includes the services of the Legislative Library, Broadcast Services, Hansard and Records Management.



Contact Information:

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HIGHLIGHTS & PARTNERSHIPS

The effects of the COVID-19 pandemic continued throughout the 2021-22 reporting period, requiring continued variations and adaptations to the response as circumstances and epidemiology changed. While the Legislature continued to meet entirely in person throughout the reporting period, changing alert levels precipitated the need for varied configurations in the Chamber dependent on physical distancing guidance, and changes to other procedures and protocols that were previously modified. The reporting period saw a gradual return to a more normal state of operations, including:

- Return to a more normal seating configuration in the Chamber with all Members sitting on the risers with their respective caucuses in the Fall 2021 sitting;
- Return of Pages to the Chamber to assist with proceedings in the Fall 2021 sitting;
- Resumption of the Speaker's Parade in the Fall 2021 sitting;
- Re-opening of the public galleries at reduced capacity in the Fall 2021 sitting, followed by full capacity in the Spring 2021 sitting; and
- Resumption of visitor tours in March 2021.

While the General Assembly continued to meet in person, the virtual-hybrid option was used extensively by Committees of the House, but predominately for in camera proceedings. The first public hearing of the Public Accounts Committee in the 50th General Assembly occurred on March 21 and 22, 2022, during which time Members of the Committee questioned current and former officials of the related department on a report of the Auditor General. One witness appeared virtually, which marked the first virtual participation of a witness appearing before a Committee during a public meeting since the House adopted the virtual proceedings option in July 2020. The integration of the virtual participant into the Committee's proceedings and live audio feed, which was live cast on the House of Assembly website, was successful and considered a significant accomplishment and learning opportunity.

In the 50th General Assembly, the Legislature proactively transitioned to the use of gender-neutral language. Presiding officers and officials are now referred to by their titles (e.g., "Speaker" rather than "Mr. Speaker" and "Clerk" rather than "Madam Clerk"); Members are called by their full names without their gender prefix and during division in the House. Standards for Hansard and Journals of the House were also modified to reflect a gender-neutral approach, using "they" rather than the gender-specific pronouns "he" and "she." The House of Assembly is also proactively incorporating the gender-neutral standards into all of its documents, policies, procedures and publications as they are revised and updated moving forward.



REPORT ON PERFORMANCE

Maintaining the principles of accountability and openness will always be a priority for the House of Assembly Service. A review of its lines of business with a forward-looking approach has identified the following priority areas over the 2020-23 planning cycle.

ISSUE 1: SUPPORT TO THE HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY MANAGEMENT COMMISSION

The House of Assembly Management Commission establishes, implements and controls financial and administrative policies applicable to the House of Assembly, the House of Assembly Service and the Statutory Offices. The Commission oversees the finances of the House of Assembly, including its budget, revenues, expenses, assets and liabilities. It ensures the proper administration of allowances for Members, as well as reimbursement and payment of their expenditures.

The support of the House of Assembly Service is critical to the Commission in carrying out its mandate as established in the *House of Assembly Accountability, Integrity and Administration Act*. The HOAS provides full secretariat support to the Commission, including researching issues; preparing briefing notes and other support materials for the Commission’s consideration; preparing and tracking Minutes of all meetings; and ensuring that all necessary work to properly action decisions of the Commission is fulfilled.

Objectives:

By March 31, 2022, the House of Assembly Service will have supported the operations of the House of Assembly Management Commission.

Planned Results	Actual Results
Conducted research and prepared all briefing materials necessary for meetings of the Commission.	The House of Assembly Management Commission held a total of 11 meetings throughout the reporting period. Research was conducted, and briefing materials and other supporting documents were prepared as required for each meeting. All briefing materials (except for in camera meetings) can be viewed at: www.assembly.nl.ca/ManComm/Meetings/



Planned Results	Actual Results
Prepared and distributed Minutes of all Commission meetings.	The Minutes for all meetings of the Commission were prepared, approved, distributed, tabled in the House of Assembly and posted to the House of Assembly website as required under the <i>House of Assembly Accountability, Integrity and Administration Act</i> . All Minutes for the reporting period can be viewed at: www.assembly.nl.ca/ManComm/Meetings/
Tracked all Minutes of the Commission and completed the work necessary to properly action them.	A total of 50 decisions were issued by the Management Commission during the reporting period. All decisions of the Commission have been appropriately actioned and completed where possible.
Updated and maintained manuals and templates that support the work of the Commission, as necessary.	Updates and revisions to Management Commission orientation and training materials were completed to support the transition to a new General Assembly and onboarding of new Members to the Commission following the 51 st General Election.

Discussion of Results

The House of Assembly Service fulfilled its mandate to support the operations of the House of Assembly Management Commission throughout the reporting period by ensuring that briefing materials and supporting documents were prepared and distributed for all meetings, that Minutes were approved, distributed and tabled, and that decisions of the Commission were appropriately actioned where possible.

Briefing materials for all regular meetings of the Management Commission are posted to the House of Assembly website, as well as all approved Minutes, directives and rule amendments.

To support the new General Assembly transition, which occurred during the reporting period, significant updates and revisions were undertaken to Management Commission orientation and training materials to support onboarding of new



Members to the Commission. As a result of the transition, the Management Commission welcomed a new Chair and three Members who had not previously served on the Commission. Training and orientation sessions were delivered to all Members, new and returning, to ensure consistent and clear understanding of their roles, responsibilities and fiduciary duties.



ISSUE 2: SUPPORT TO MEMBERS OF THE HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY

A main line of business for the House of Assembly Service is providing support to the 40 Members of the House of Assembly. The HOAS is responsible for ensuring that all Members have the tools and resources they require to effectively carry out their role as elected officials. While supports and services are provided to Members on an ongoing basis, the volume of work increases following general elections and by-elections. A provincial general election took place and the official results announced just prior to the end of the previous reporting period, which meant the majority of planning and transition work was carried out during the period encompassed by this report.

By March 31, 2022, the House of Assembly Service will have continued to provide the necessary support to Members of the House of Assembly.

Indicators:

Planned Results	Actual Results
Revised and updated Member guides, manuals and orientation materials as required.	Significant work was undertaken to ensure materials were prepared and updated, including the <u>Members' Guide to Resources and Allowances</u> and the <u>Members' Parliamentary Guide</u> . In addition to updating existing guides and manuals, a new guide was developed with respect to working on Standing and Select Committees of the House of Assembly. Updates were also carried out to existing training modules and, in addition, three new training modules were developed on the following topics: <ul style="list-style-type: none">- <u>Budget & Related Proceedings</u>- <u>Legislative Process</u>- <u>Working on Standing & Select Committees</u>
Provided training and orientation to newly elected Members and their staff, as required.	During the reporting period, significant work was undertaken to execute the training and orientation delivery strategy following the election of the 50 th General Assembly. The following modules were delivered either to all Members or to



Planned Results	Actual Results
	<p>first-time elected Members:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- <u>Budget & Related Proceedings</u>- <u>Legislative Process</u>- <u>Working on Standing & Select Committees</u>- <u>Overview of Legislature, Conduct & Accountability</u>- <u>Conducting Constituency Business & Office Operations</u>- <u>Travel and Living</u>- <u>Members' Records & Protection of Privacy</u>- <u>Parliamentary Procedures & Practice</u>- <u>Respectful Workplace & Understanding Workplace Stress</u> <p>In addition to the above-noted for MHAs, newly hired constituency assistants (CAs) received the following suite of training:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- <u>Conducting Constituency Business & Office Operations</u>- <u>Travel & Living</u>- <u>Members' Records & Protection of Privacy</u> <p>Given the higher rate of turnover typically experienced among CAs, the suite of training is conducted with any newly hired CAs on a quarterly basis, which took place during each quarter of the 2021-22 reporting period.</p>
<p>Provided ongoing services to Members, as required, to support them in carrying out their roles.</p>	<p>Non-partisan services were provided to all Members and their staff as required. This included support in submitting and processing expense claims; purchasing goods and services; providing parliamentary advice; tendering, acquiring and setting up constituency offices; and providing research and reference support. During the reporting period, significant work was also carried</p>



Planned Results	Actual Results
	out to support the transition between the 49 th and 50 th General Assemblies.

Discussion of Results

The core mandate of the House of Assembly Service is to provide non-partisan support, services and advice to all 40 Members to assist them in carrying out their role as elected officials. A wide variety of services are provided to Members on a daily basis, ranging from expense-claims processing, purchasing of goods and services, library reference and research, acquiring and setting up constituency offices, providing advice and guidance on the management of records and providing parliamentary and procedural advice.

The transition between general assemblies leading up to and following a general election requires significant preparation, planning and execution of the House of Assembly Service. This work is required to ensure outgoing Members are provided with necessary support and assistance on their departure, and to ensure readiness for the new general assembly, including swearing-in of Members; orientation/training for Members and constituency assistants, and development of related materials; office set-up; and provision of other transition resources.

Following the release of the official election results for the 51st General Election on March 27, 2021, significant work was carried out in the months following to ensure a smooth and efficient transition to the 50th General Assembly. On April 12, 2021, 39 Members were sworn-in. Swearing-in of the 40th Member was delayed due to the requirement for a judicial recount for the District of St. John's East - Quidi Vidi. Swearing-in of that Member took place on May 18, 2021.

Due to the circumstances with COVID-19, significant modifications and adaptations were required to the transition plans used for previous general assemblies, including the Swearing-in Ceremony for Members, election of Speaker proceedings, delivery of training modules, and et cetera. While the planning requirements were increased due to the circumstances, the transition to the new General Assembly was executed safely and efficiently.



ISSUE 3: SUPPORT TO STANDING AND SELECT COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY

A main line of business for the House of Assembly Service includes support to the Standing and Select Committees of the House of Assembly. The Office of the Clerk provides supports to assist committees in their work, such as procedural advice and expertise, research, report writing and media relations.

The committee clerk is the procedural and administrative advisor to both the Chair and the committee, carrying out these duties and responsibilities in consultation with the Chair and at the direction of the committee. The committee clerk is consulted for advice on the operation, procedural rules or mandate of the committee and also conducts non-partisan research and drafts reports and other documents, or delegates the work to other House of Assembly Service employees, as needed.

Objectives:

By March 31, 2022, the House of Assembly Service will have continued to provide support, as required, to Standing and Select Committees of the House of Assembly.

Indicators:

Planned Results	Actual Results
Organized logistics for Committee meetings, including the preparation of meeting agendas, minutes and clerking Committee meetings.	During the reporting period, the Standing Committees of the House were very active, requiring extensive procedural, operational, logistical and research support of the House of Assembly Service. The following provides a breakdown of the number of meetings for each Standing Committee in the reporting period: Government Services Committee – 3 Privileges and Elections Committee – 4 Public Accounts Committee – 7 Resource Committee – 5 Standing Orders Committee – 6 Social Services Committee – 5
Provided procedural and operational advice, as required.	
Conducted non-partisan research and reference support, as required.	
Drafted Committee reports and other documents, as required.	



Planned Results	Actual Results
Developed and updated related orientation manuals and training materials, as required.	A new training module respecting Members' roles and work on Committees was developed, which was delivered as part of the training and orientation strategy for Members of the 50 th General Assembly.

Discussion of Results

During the reporting period, significant work and planning was carried out to support the work of Standing Committees of the House and their operations. This work included planning and logistics for all Committee meetings, provision of procedural advice and expertise, research and analysis of issues before the Committee, drafting of Committee minutes and reports and media relations.

A significant portion of work required to support the Standing Committees on Government Services, Social Services and Resource took place during June 2021 when these Committees reviewed the 2021 Estimates referred to them as part of the annual budget process in the House of Assembly. The meetings held during that period required significant planning and work, as they were supported while the House was in Session. It was further exacerbated by circumstances of the COVID-19 pandemic, which required modifications to normal operating procedures and processes.

The Public Accounts Committee was very active in the reporting period. In addition to its regular oversight work, the Committee received two reports of the Auditor General in relation to referrals from the Public Accounts Committee under section 16 of the *Auditor General Act*. The first public hearing of the Committee in the 50th General Assembly occurred on March 21 and 22, during which time Members of the Committee questioned officials on the report of the Auditor General entitled MV Veteran and MV Legionnaire. This report was the result of a review requested by the PAC from a previous General Assembly, reviewing the purchasing process for two separate ferries in the province, including mechanical issues experienced since entering into service. Further, the Committee undertook training and research in the area of best practices of public accounts committees across the country.

The Standing Orders Committee was also quite active in the reporting period. Its early meetings were focused on identifying priorities for the 50th General Assembly, with its first report being presented to the House on March 15, 2021. The report was adopted by the House on March 16, which affected the following changes to the Standing Orders:

- a. the enforcement of Standing Order 48 by the Speaker with regard to relevancy at all times during debate, including debate on money bills;



- b. amendments to codify the time provided for ministerial statements and responses by Members of the Official Opposition and the Third Party;
- c. amendments to the Standing Orders that decrease the time allocation for each Member during debate on private Members' motions from 15 minutes to 10 minutes, and provides for Members to seek an advance ruling from the Speaker on amendments to private Members' motions outside of the time allotted for debate; and
- d. a provisional amendment to the Standing Orders for a period of one year with respect to deferral of vote on division.

The Privileges and Elections Committee's work in the reporting period involved a review of the Harassment-Free Workplace Policy Applicable to Complaints Against Members (the Policy). The Committee conducted the review in accordance with section 17 of the Policy, which requires the Committee to review the Policy once in each general assembly, or as required. The Committee's work on the matter was undertaken as a result of correspondence from the Citizens' Representative, the Statutory Officer responsible for oversight of the complaint and resolution processes, outlining a potential issue in the confidentiality provisions identified in the execution of a process under the Policy. The Committee's report, including its recommendations on the matter, was presented to the House in the subsequent reporting period (2022-23) and will be detailed in the annual report for that period.



OPPORTUNITIES & CHALLENGES

While planning for the return to a post-pandemic workplace commenced in the 2021-22 reporting period, work in this area will no doubt continue to be top of mind in the reporting period ahead. The pandemic presented challenges in many aspects, but it also provided an opportunity to find efficiencies, innovations and adaptations that positively affected our operations and were accomplished in a much shorter time frame due to the unique circumstances of the time. While the House of Assembly Service has returned to a more normal state of operations, it must remain prepared and nimble to respond to possible regressions in public health circumstances. A challenge for an organization that is limited in its human resource capacity, particularly in the group that supports the execution of the parliamentary process, is ensuring that adequate resources are available to support the House when it is in Session should there be further outbreaks of the virus and continued isolation requirements.

Over the last several reporting periods, the House of Assembly Service, and in particular the Office of the Clerk, has done significant work in developing standards and increasing capacity as it relates to supporting the operations of Parliament. Two areas of particular focus to date have been the operations of and support to Standing and Select Committees, as well as standards and workflow processes related to the Journals of the House. While work in this area has been challenging and oftentimes tedious, the benefits of these efforts and efficiencies achieved as a result of their implementation are now being recognized in several aspects of parliamentary operations. The Office of the Clerk is experiencing a time of transition and change as a result of the retirement of several employees from key positions that support the parliamentary process. This presents both a challenge and an opportunity for the office: balancing preservation of key procedural and institutional knowledge with re-imagining operations and processes to find improvements and build further capacity.



FINANCIAL INFORMATION

Audited financial information will be included in the Annual Report of the House of Assembly Management Commission

LEGISLATURE
Statement of Expenditure and Related Revenue
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2022

	Actual	Estimates	
		Amended	Original
	\$	\$	\$
HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY			
HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY			
<i>CURRENT</i>			
1.1.01. ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT			
01. Salaries	1,765,181	1,898,900	1,980,000
Operating Accounts:			
<i>Employee Benefits</i>	3,539	4,500	4,500
<i>Transportation and Communications</i>	26,325	59,400	59,400
<i>Supplies</i>	32,481	36,200	36,200
<i>Professional Services</i>	70,956	71,000	61,100
<i>Purchased Services</i>	17,253	52,000	62,000
<i>Property, Furnishings and Equipment</i>	36,168	92,500	92,500
02. Operating Accounts	<u>186,722</u>	<u>315,600</u>	<u>315,700</u>
	<u>1,951,903</u>	<u>2,214,500</u>	<u>2,295,700</u>
02. Revenue - Provincial	<u>(3,632)</u>	-	-
Total: Administrative Support	<u>1,948,271</u>	<u>2,214,500</u>	<u>2,295,700</u>
1.1.02. LEGISLATIVE LIBRARY AND RECORDS MANAGEMENT			
01. Salaries	651,972	687,200	687,200
Operating Accounts:			
<i>Employee Benefits</i>	1,058	1,100	900
<i>Transportation and Communications</i>	-	9,500	10,200
<i>Supplies</i>	46,643	47,500	47,000
<i>Purchased Services</i>	3,569	8,500	8,500
02. Operating Accounts	<u>51,270</u>	<u>66,600</u>	<u>66,600</u>
Total: Legislative Library and Records Management	<u>703,242</u>	<u>753,800</u>	<u>753,800</u>



LEGISLATURE (CONTINUED)

	Actual	Estimates	
		Amended	Original
	\$	\$	\$
HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY			
HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY			
<i>CURRENT</i>			
1.1.03. HANSARD AND THE BROADCAST CENTRE			
01. Salaries	603,794	670,800	670,800
Operating Accounts:			
<i>Employee Benefits</i>	-	-	600
<i>Transportation and Communications</i>	1,688	4,800	7,300
<i>Supplies</i>	50,776	55,900	55,900
<i>Purchased Services</i>	115,937	204,000	204,000
<i>Property, Furnishings and Equipment</i>	7,952	13,100	10,000
02. Operating Accounts	176,353	277,800	277,800
Total: Hansard and the Broadcast Centre	780,147	948,600	948,600
1.1.04. MEMBERS' RESOURCES			
01. Salaries	6,470,077	6,692,200	6,689,000
Operating Accounts:			
<i>Transportation and Communications</i>	5,254	5,300	5,200
<i>Professional Services</i>	41,390	41,400	-
<i>Purchased Services</i>	10,666	11,000	10,000
02. Operating Accounts	57,310	57,700	15,200
09. Allowances and Assistance	1,177,989	2,356,400	2,363,700
10. Grants and Subsidies	4,504	6,700	6,100
	7,709,880	9,113,000	9,074,000
02. Revenue - Provincial	(55,353)	-	-
Total: Members' Resources	7,654,527	9,113,000	9,074,000



LEGISLATURE (CONTINUED)

	Actual	Estimates	
		Amended	Original
	\$	\$	\$
HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY			
HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY			
<i>CURRENT</i>			
1.1.05. HOUSE OPERATIONS			
01. Salaries	151,182	209,100	209,100
Operating Accounts:			
<i>Employee Benefits</i>	88	5,900	5,900
<i>Transportation and Communications</i>	35,729	40,300	125,000
<i>Supplies</i>	6,164	14,500	14,500
<i>Professional Services</i>	73,888	74,500	3,900
<i>Purchased Services</i>	31,379	41,500	41,500
<i>Property, Furnishings and Equipment</i>	43,111	43,200	57,100
02. Operating Accounts	190,359	219,900	247,900
10. Grants and Subsidies	1,455	10,100	11,600
Total: House Operations	342,996	439,100	468,600
1.1.06. GOVERNMENT MEMBERS CAUCUS			
01. Salaries	285,796	327,200	327,200
Operating Accounts:			
<i>Employee Benefits</i>	-	1,000	1,000
<i>Transportation and Communications</i>	8,840	17,900	19,900
<i>Supplies</i>	9,965	10,600	8,600
<i>Purchased Services</i>	1,895	7,500	7,500
<i>Property, Furnishings and Equipment</i>	781	2,400	2,400
02. Operating Accounts	21,481	39,400	39,400
10. Grants and Subsidies	31,529	31,600	30,100
Total: Government Members Caucus	338,806	398,200	396,700



LEGISLATURE (CONTINUED)

	Actual	Estimates	
		Amended	Original
	\$	\$	\$
HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY			
HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY			
<i>CURRENT</i>			
1.1.07. OFFICIAL OPPOSITION CAUCUS			
01. Salaries	1,095,828	1,095,900	1,105,100
Operating Accounts:			
<i>Employee Benefits</i>	2,537	3,000	3,000
<i>Transportation and Communications</i>	34,785	72,400	79,400
<i>Supplies</i>	17,391	24,000	24,000
<i>Purchased Services</i>	14,674	22,000	22,000
<i>Property, Furnishings and Equipment</i>	12,441	12,500	5,500
02. Operating Accounts	81,828	133,900	133,900
10. Grants and Subsidies	18,864	19,000	19,600
Total: Official Opposition Caucus	1,196,520	1,248,800	1,258,600
1.1.08. THIRD PARTY CAUCUS			
01. Salaries	400,071	405,600	405,600
Operating Accounts:			
<i>Employee Benefits</i>	-	1,000	1,000
<i>Transportation and Communications</i>	5,934	21,700	21,700
<i>Supplies</i>	2,650	8,300	8,300
<i>Purchased Services</i>	3,014	7,500	7,500
<i>Property, Furnishings and Equipment</i>	985	1,800	1,800
02. Operating Accounts	12,583	40,300	40,300
10. Grants and Subsidies	12,011	12,100	12,100
Total: Third Party Caucus	424,665	458,000	458,000
TOTAL: HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY	13,389,174	15,574,000	15,654,000
TOTAL: HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY	13,389,174	15,574,000	15,654,000