



Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan

BOARD OF INTERNAL ECONOMY

MINUTES AND VERBATIM REPORT

**Published under the authority of
The Honourable P. Myron Kowalsky
Speaker**



No. 3 — July 29, 2004 (Minutes)
No. 4 — August 19, 2004 (Minutes and Verbatim)
No. 5 — September 16, 2004 (Minutes)

**BOARD OF INTERNAL ECONOMY
2004**

Hon. P. Myron Kowalsky, Chair
Prince Albert Carlton

Mr. Glenn Hagel
Moose Jaw North

Ms. Donna Harpauer
Humboldt

Mr. Ben Heppner
Martensville

Hon. Deb Higgins
Moose Jaw Wakamow

Hon. Andrew Thomson
Regina South

Mr. Kevin Yates
Regina Dewdney

BOARD OF INTERNAL ECONOMY

Teleconference
July 29, 2004
9:30 a.m.

Present:**Members of the Board of Internal Economy**

Hon. P. Myron Kowalsky, Chair
Ms. Donna Harpauer
Mr. Ben Heppner
Hon. Andrew Thomson
Mr. Kevin Yates

Staff to the Board

Marilyn Borowski, Director, Financial Services
Gwenn Ronyk, Clerk of the Legislative Assembly
Margaret Tulloch, Secretary to the Board

The committee agreed to meet in camera.

ITEM 1**Decision Item: Recommendation of the Selection Committee for the Position of Provincial Ombudsman**

Moved by Mr. Thomson, seconded by Mr. Heppner:

That the report of the Ombudsman Selection Panel recommending the appointment of Kevin Fenwick be approved; and

That the Chair of the Board of Internal Economy be authorized to forward the recommendation to the Lieutenant Governor in Council for a Order in Council to make an acting appointment effective October 1, 2004 and to prepare a resolution for the formal appointment for consideration by the Legislative Assembly at the next sitting.

A debate arising and the question being put, it was agreed to unanimously. Mr. Hagel submitted a paper ballot giving his approval of the selection.

Minute #1588

ITEM 2**Table Item: Directive #24 Review**

The Chair tabled the Directive #24 Review, as required by section (7) of the Directive, and noted it will be on the agenda for the next in-person meeting of the Board.

Mr. Thomson asked for clarification on local purchasing procedures.

ITEM 3**Information Item: Update on Progress of the Recruitment of the Chief Electoral Officer**

The Clerk reported on the recruitment process.

ITEM 4**Other Business**

Mr. Yates asked about the calculation of Directive #4.1 allowances based on the election enumeration. Mr. Thomson suggested an option would be to establish population-based rates for the calculation of the allowance.

The Clerk committed to preparing a report for the Board's consideration at a future meeting.

The Speaker gave notice that the Board will next meet by teleconference on September 16, 2004.

The meeting adjourned at 9:45 a.m.

BOARD OF INTERNAL ECONOMY

Teleconference
August 19, 2004
2:05 p.m.

Present:

Members of the Board of Internal Economy

Hon. P. Myron Kowalsky, Chair
Mr. Ben Heppner
Hon. Deb Higgins
Hon. Andrew Thomson
Mr. Kevin Yates

Staff to the Board

Marilyn Borowski, Director, Financial Services
Gwenn Ronyk, Clerk of the Legislative Assembly
Margaret Tulloch, Secretary to the Board

Legislative Assembly Staff

Greg Putz
Ihor Sywanyk
Gary Ward

ITEM 1

Decision Item: Legislative Chamber Audio System Replacement and Wiring Upgrade

Moved by Mr. Heppner, seconded by Mr. Thomson:

That the Board of Internal Economy approves funding of \$267,000 for the Legislative Chamber Audio System Replacement and Wiring Upgrade.

A debate arising and the question being put, it was agreed to unanimously.

Minute #1589

The Speaker gave notice that the Board will next meet by teleconference on September 16, 2004.

The meeting adjourned at 2:34 p.m.

BOARD OF INTERNAL ECONOMY

Teleconference
September 16, 2004
4:00 p.m.

Present:**Members of the Board of Internal Economy**

Hon. Deb Higgins

Mr. Kevin Yates

By Teleconference:

Hon. P. Myron Kowalsky, Chair

Mr. Glenn Hagel

Ms. Donna Harpauer

Mr. Ben Heppner

Hon. Andrew Thomson

Staff to the Board

Marilyn Borowski, Director, Financial Services

Gwenn Ronyk, Clerk of the Legislative Assembly

Ken Ring, Legislative Counsel and Law Clerk

Greg Putz, Deputy Clerk

Margaret Tulloch, Secretary to the Board

The committee agreed to meet in camera.

ITEM 1**Decision Item: Recommendation of the Selection Committee for the Position of Chief Electoral Officer**

Moved by Mr. Hagel, seconded by Ms. Harpauer:

That the report of the Chief Electoral Officer Selection Panel recommending the appointment of Jean Ouellet be approved; and

That the Chair of the Board of Internal Economy be authorized to forward the recommendation to the Premier and the Leader of the Opposition (and House Leaders) that Mr. Ouellet be appointed by resolution of the Legislative Assembly at the fall sitting.

A debate arising and the question being put, it was agreed to unanimously.

Minute #1590**ITEM 2****Discussion Item:** Correspondence regarding the Chief Electoral Officer Position.**ITEM 3****Information Item:** Update on status of Sound System Upgrade Project.

The meeting adjourned at 3:29 p.m.

The board met at 14:05.

The Chair: — The first thing I want to do is say welcome to everybody that's assembled, both by telephone and by being present in room 10 in the legislature. To the best of my knowledge right now, the MLAs (Member of the Legislative Assembly) that are present are Ben Heppner, Kevin Yates, MLA Andrew Thomson, and Myron Kowalsky, which constitutes a quorum. So therefore I would call this meeting to order, and we'll proceed from there.

I don't think there's any old business that we want to deal with. Really what we want to deal with is one item, and that is with respect to the sound system in the Chamber and in the gallery and electrical. This issue . . . first of all, I want to be able to do it by phone so it saves us some travel expense, and also just we can do something in half an hour that I think might take otherwise four or five hours of travel. Well thank you all for assembling this way.

And the issue before us is to look at a proposal for repairing or replacing the existing microphone and amplification system in the Chamber. And as there were . . . discussions were going on informally about that, one of the messages that I was getting loud and clear was to see if we could do something about improving the sound quality or the sound that the people in the gallery get, and also that we would wire the Chamber fully to make it easy to hook up computers so that members could just come in and plug in and wouldn't have to use the wireless and would also have a place to plug in without stringing long cords.

All of this constitutes work that would have to . . . you know, we'd have to pull up the desks and pull up the carpet in order to do this so that . . . And it would also . . . because we're dealing with a system which we want to be fail-safe, we can't just be getting materials that are off the shelf because you want to be able to get switches that have very — what is it? — a very long-term capacity, fail-safe capacity, and not something that would go like an ordinary light bulb would go.

So since, we've had Gary and Kerry and Ihor working on the room 10 refurbishment. And now that we've got that successfully into place, we've asked them to put into place a proposal, under the supervision of Greg, for how this could be done, with some detail on the funding, and also which will help us understand the complexity of this.

And what I want to do, Greg, is ask you, at this time, maybe just to take us through some of the detail on it. And then, members may have some questions they might want to ask about it.

Mr. Putz: — Okay, sure. I expect that each of the members have received the fax from the Speaker's office, the documentation that was prepared for this, namely, the decision item. If you have that, there's some background information there. So what I propose to do is to go through this document. It also includes the costing out of each of the components of this proposal. So we can get into that as well, if you have questions on that.

But to begin with, in looking at this proposal, I guess the driving impetus behind all of this is the aging sound system that we have in the Chamber presently. The sound system was put into place in 1978. And as members are aware, we are starting to have a number of reliability problems with that sound system. It did fail completely back in May 2003, and it took the House out of service for the balance of that day. And we were just lucky that we were able to fix the circuitry board for it at the time.

And after that failure, the Speaker did ask us for a report on the sound system, and it was our recommendation at that time, through a report to the standing committee in communications, that it did need to be replaced, that there were a number of failures, parts were no longer available for this system. And it was only a matter of time before we would have another failure that would take the House out of commission till we're able to, first of all, track down what the problem is and then hopefully find some replacement parts.

So at that time, we started costing out what it would be to replace the sound system, and we have continuously updated the quotes that we have on the various components of that through up till just as late as last week. So the numbers that you have in that document are fairly current. Initially we thought that the whole piece would be about 230, \$240,000. You can see from the document that you have that mostly because of the rise in the Canadian dollar compared to the American one, we have some savings there, and now the project is going to be about 30 or \$40,000 less than we had originally anticipated.

Now the replacement of the audio system, of course, is what drives the other two components of this proposal. If we are going to get the green light on replacing that audio system, it means that of course we're going to have to be replacing microphones, dealing with audio wiring and that sort of thing in the Chamber. So it just seemed to be the opportune time that we'd modernize and upgrade some of the other aspects of the Chamber, namely, bringing electricity to each of the desks and also, while at the same time, bringing data cable so that members could then tap into either Internet — which the Assembly provides for the members, the Internet access — or one day, if the members so desired to have access to whatever networks they want to hook into.

The last piece of this, of course, was gallery sound. Given our old sound system, we had some problems being able to bring the volume up to the necessary levels for people to hear the proceedings on the floor. Part of that was based on the fact that we get what's called an echo or a stadium effect in those galleries when we try to bring up the volume. And that's based on the age of our sound system, just inability to equalize sound around the Chamber with that sound system. Basically the whole system is brought up or down in volume, and you can't control various parts of the Chamber and have differential levels of sound.

The other part of it is that in the gallery — being a lot of oak and flat, hard surfaces — we were getting a lot of feedback and reverberation when you did turn the sound up. As you know, a few years ago we did a low-cost attempt at finding a solution to

that by putting some speakers up there, but that really hasn't helped all that much. And the public still continuously complains about the sound in the gallery.

So over the last couple of years, we have been in discussion with SPMC (Saskatchewan Property Management Corporation) about what can be done. And they have a solution that we're proposing as part of this decision item . . . is that on those oak seat backs, that there is a recess in there, that those recesses be filled with an acoustic absorbing fabric and that will cut back a lot of feedback on there. So it's not a really expensive proposition, but it's deemed that it will improve quite dramatically the sound quality in the gallery.

So that won't be achieved of course without the new sound system that will allow us to equalize the sound better. And again the wiring of the desks with the electrical and the data cable of course is being piggybacked on the replacement of the sound audio and the modifications that have to be made to the desk in order to facilitate that project.

So that's the background of it and, if you want, I can get into how we've costed this out — unless there's some questions just on the sound system and the proposal as presented. Are there any questions before I go on to the costing of it?

Mr. Heppner: — This may not be quite the correct place for the question, but the last system we had, we basically operated it for nearly 30 years?

Mr. Putz: — That's correct.

Mr. Heppner: — The way the whole electronic system and everything else modernizes changes, what attention has been paid to trying to assure, as much as possible, that there's the long-term repair capabilities for our next system?

Mr. Putz: — Well this being a new system, of course, there'll be a warranty period with it. Part of the complexity of this system isn't just replacing the sound and its integrating it with our television system, because there's a control panel that the *Hansard* operator uses to switch on the mikes and that causes the TV cameras to focus on the member who is recognized to speak. And there's a number of stored camera shots. Not only that, as when that microphone is activated, we have another system that is a character generator that scrolls across the member's name, their party affiliation and their title, and that sort of thing. All of these things have to be integrated together, so that's part of the complexity and cost of this project.

Now this would be a digital sound system of course, and it's state-of-the-art. And it's the same system we're proposing that's being installed in most of the parliaments across this country.

The system that we're looking at has recently been installed in Newfoundland, Quebec. House of Commons is in the process of doing it, the Senate. Alberta is looking to replace their sound system with the same thing. And currently, Yellowknife is having a digital sound system installed, and most recently of course, Nunavut when they became a territory.

So we're proposing to install the same system that these other parliaments have installed or are in the process of installing, so

we're all sort of in the same boat. There will be kind of a shelter in the fact that all of us will have the same equipment, more or less, and require the same sort of service and reliability.

We're anticipating that this system should last us probably 20 or 30 years, just the same as the last one did. We don't anticipate that there's going to be any great leap in technology that will cause us to need to change our system. Like I said, it's state-of-the-art.

And, I don't know if Gary or Ihor want to add to what I just said, but . . . No. They're nodding. They're shaking their heads that they have nothing to add.

Mr. Heppner: — That's good. I just wanted to make sure that we didn't have a system that was going to be obsolete because we can't maintain it.

Mr. Putz: — Yes. The old system is an analog system, and as I kind of mentioned in my preface, there are no parts available for that any more. There's simply nobody making systems like that.

All the new systems are digital, so that's again one of the reasons we want to build on a new platform, something that's going to be supported into the future.

Hon. Mr. Thomson: — If I could just indicate, Deb Higgins has joined us here.

Mr. Putz: — Okay. Hi Deb. It's Greg.

The Chair: — Hello, Deb. Just to fill you in, Deb, we've got on board Ben Heppner, Kevin Yates, Myron Kowalsky, Andrew Thomson, and staff on as well.

Hon. Ms. Higgins: — Thanks, Myron.

The Chair: — Thank you. So carry on, Greg.

Mr. Putz: — Okay. If there are any other questions . . . are there any other questions then on sort of the background to this project and why we're recommending that it proceed?

The Chair: — Maybe you could just take us through some of the detail.

Mr. Putz: — Okay. In the document that we prepared for you, we have an outline of each of the three different components which I said are interrelated. But of course, the bulk of the cost in this project is associated with the replacement of the actual sound system with a digital system. And that includes not just the sound system per se but some of the components that will be needed to integrate it with our television and character generation and to make sure that the sound is going through to *Hansard* for our digital transcription and all the rest of it.

So what the broadcast people have done over the last two years is researched what components are necessary, costed them out, and they've also talked to Applied Electronics Ltd. which is the company that installed our original system, the Vinton camera system, the robotic system. They designed the control panel that ties all of these things together, and that's where we got the cost estimate for some of the software programming and the custom

design of a new panel to link all this stuff together.

So the total cost that we're projecting for the digital sound system and software development and design is \$192,275 which, as I noted at the outset, is almost \$40,000 less than two years ago when we first researched this because, as you know, with a lot of technology items, the price comes down. Plus we've got the benefit here of a higher Canadian dollar than what we had when we first investigated some of these costs.

Now on top of that then we have the provincial sales tax on that which we pay; that's just over \$13,000.

Now in our proposal, we're proposing that we install this using our in-house help, namely our broadcast services branch. And what we're told is that we're going to save about \$47,000 in installation cost by using our own people. So we just wanted to point that out. Otherwise if we're going out on the basis of just getting a whole package, we probably have to add 47 or \$50,000 on to the cost.

As I mentioned, it'll require some modifications to the desks. Of course the old microphones will have to go. And that little speaker console, that'll have to go. So we've got an estimate from SPMC on what the cost of modifying the desks and doing some refurbishment work . . . because you're going to have to take that console off there. So we got a quote on that; that's about \$22,000.

What we also want to do while we're at this . . . we've had so many ceremonies in the Chamber recently that we're always stringing wires for when we have ceremonies such as the volunteer medal, when we set up a podium for the master of ceremonies. We want to actually install a microphone outlet in the floor so that we don't have to string wire from one of the members' desks and then tape it over so people don't trip on it.

And also now that we're using the Chamber as a committee room, we want to put wiring in place so that we can just plug those witness tables in when they're brought in rather than having to hook wires up from one of the member's desk and then tape it to the floor each and every day that we go into committee. So we are adding some positions.

As well this proposal . . . SPMC as well as our people were quite concerned that in the past any time we had a different seating configuration — we've had a number of those over the past 15, 20 years with different sizes of oppositions and governments and various party configurations in the House — it always means that when we move desks around we have to cut the carpet and splice it here and there, and run wires here and there all over the place.

And while we're at it on this proposal, what we'd like to do is put 88 positions in the Chamber. We've researched that these are the number that'll be needed to handle the numerous possible seating configurations so that it only means that when you move a desk, you move the desk as a unit, and you use what's called a military plug to plug the whole desk into the floor. And that connects your electricity, your data, and your sound all together in one thing, and it just eases the problems that are associated with moving desks around. Plus, if we ever do get a new carpet in that Chamber some year, that it'll negate

any issue of having to cut up a new carpet to switch desks around.

So the Chamber then would be in a position . . . we'd be in a position that we're ready to reconfigure it in any way without having to do a lot of damage to the carpet as it exists now, further damage to it or damage any new carpet that's ever put in there. That's going to cost about 20,000 to do it, and that's an estimate we've gotten from SPMC through their construction trade people.

The wiring upgrade part of this, as I said, we're trying to piggyback on the fact that we're going to be doing wiring anyway. The electrical cabling is the lion's share of the cost there. The data cabling would be run alongside the audio and the electrical of course, and that component of the cost is about 36,000.

The Chair: — Just on that alone there, the cable you're putting in there, as I understand, it will be quite well shielded from the 110.

Mr. Putz: — We had that investigated, and the electrical of course could cause interference with the data and the audio cabling, so it has to be very well insulated as you mentioned, Mr. Speaker. And SPMC said that given the existing troughs that are under the carpet plus the additional positions that have to be put in, that there is room to ensure that everything will be properly shielded. And they had an expert in to look at that and advise us that that won't be a problem for us.

Okay, the last part of this is the gallery sound. And I mentioned in my preface that that involves putting some acoustical fabric in the backs of the seats in the gallery. SPMC had somebody in to look at that as well, and their estimate for that fabric would be about \$10,000 to do all three of the visitors' galleries — the east and west and the Speaker's gallery.

The total cost then for this project would be just under \$300,000, which is about 50,000 less than what we had originally anticipated. And of that cost, SPMC has committed that they'll cover most of the construction costs to the tune of about \$30,000. So the cost to the Assembly would be just shy of \$268,000, and that's what we've put in the recommendation for the board to approve today.

So I think that's all I have to say unless Gary and you have anything to add to this. Oh, by the way, just for your information, Gwenn Ronyk has joined us as well.

The Chair: — Well thank you very much, Greg. Anything from Ihor or Gary at this juncture?

Mr. Putz: — They've both indicated they have nothing to add unless you have some further questions that they'd like you to answer, specific questions.

The Chair: — To be clear there, we're not recommending any kind of an earphone system or anything like that in the gallery?

Mr. Putz: — No. Originally, once upon a time, that was proposed as one of the solutions to have a — sorry, my throat's just a bit dry — a microwave sound system where the members,

the public wanting to follow along proceedings would have to wear a headset. We deemed that to be too costly and impractical, and we are not proposing that anyway this time around.

What we're doing is hoping to get rid of that feedback and stadium sound problem with the new audio system and being able to equalize the sound better, to bring the gallery sound up. And if we can bring the gallery sound up without risk of having reverberation off the benches, then we should solve a lot of our problems.

The Chair: — Okay. Thank you very much. And so following up on that explanation, the recommendation from the Chair is that the Board of Internal Economy approves funding of \$267,000 for the Legislative Chamber audio system. And if anybody has any comments or questions you want to put, this is the time to do it.

If not, what do you think of the recommendation?

Mr. Heppner: — Ben Heppner here. I like it. I think it's . . . We've had definite concerns raised — I think all of us — on all three of those major points that we're addressing, so I think the time has come. And the fact that we're doing similar projects to what's happening in other provinces, I think means that the longevity is probably going to be there, and we'll get good use out of the system that we're getting.

The Chair: — Anybody else? Do you want to move a motion then on that, Mr. Heppner?

Mr. Heppner: — I'll do so.

The Chair: — Motion moved by Mr. Heppner that the recommendation as printed be accepted. Is there a seconder to the motion?

Hon. Mr. Thomson: — I'll second it. Thomson.

The Chair: — Mr. Thomson. Any other comments? Okay. Then we'll take a voice vote on this. Those in favour of the motion, say aye.

Some Hon. Members: — Aye.

The Chair: — Those opposed to the motion, say nay. I hear no nays, so therefore I declare the motion passed unanimously.

Thank you very much, Greg, to you and the rest of the staff, Ihor and Gary, for preparing this and working on it for many years to get this far. Now the rest of the work begins, I guess.

Mr. Putz: — Yes, now we go from proposal to project, so we'll start working on the project.

The Chair: — And members could kind of just jot down in their calendar that our next proposed meeting was going to be on September 16. And any other final comments from anybody?

Mr. Heppner: — Mr. Speaker looks very good in his swimming trunks.

The Chair: — And I've got this week and a little bit of next week yet.

Hon. Mr. Thomson: — So glad we're on the telephone for that one.

The Chair: — Well I thank you all very much for attending this meeting. Meeting's adjourned.

The board adjourned at 14:29.

