STANDING COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC ACCOUNTS

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STANDING COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC ACCOUNTS

Trent Wotherspoon, Chair
Regina Mount Royal

Sean Wilson, Deputy Chair
Canora-Pelly

David Chan
Yorkton

Brad Crassweller
White City-Qu'Appelle

Hugh Gordon
Saskatoon Silverspring

Hon. Daryl Harrison
Cannington

Joan Pratchler
Regina Rochdale

[The committee met at 09:24.]

Chair Wotherspoon: — Okay, good morning. Welcome to the Standing Committee on Public Accounts. My name's Trent Wotherspoon, MLA [Member of the Legislative Assembly] for Regina Mount Royal. I serve as the Chair of the Public Accounts. I'd like to introduce Sean Wilson, Deputy Chair — MLA Wilson, I should say — MLA Chan, MLA Crassweller. MLA Kropf is substituting for MLA Harrison. And MLA Pratchler as well as MLA Gordon are in attendance.

We have the following documents to table: PAC 36-30, Ministry of Energy and Resources: Response to questions raised at the February 25th, 2025 meeting; PAC 37-30, Ministry of Education: Report of public losses, December 1st, 2024 to February 28th, 2025; PAC 38-30: Provincial Auditor of Saskatchewan: Fourth quarter financial forecast for the year ending March 31st, 2025; PAC 39-30, Ministry of Advanced Education: Report of public losses, January 1, 2025 to March 31st, 2025; PAC 40-30, Ministry of Health: Report of public losses, January 1st, 2025 to March 31st, 2025; PAC 41-30, Ministry of Finance: Report of public losses, January 1st, 2025 to March 31st, 2025.

MLA Gordon.

Hugh Gordon: — Yes, I'd like to make a motion that I hope this whole committee would be willing to agree to with respect to having the Provincial Auditor looking into the GTH [Global Transportation Hub]-Costco fiasco.

Chair Wotherspoon: — If you're looking to bring a motion, you can speak briefly to the motion and then introduce that motion.

Hugh Gordon: — Very well. I move:

> That the Standing Committee on Public Accounts, pursuant to subsection 16(1) of *The Provincial Auditor Act*, request that the Provincial Auditor perform a special assignment investigation to examine the actions, procedures, policies, and expenditures of the Global Transportation Hub and its recent attempt to negotiate a deal for the construction of a Costco store near Regina.

And I've signed the motion.

Chair Wotherspoon: — Would committee members be ready for that question? This would be a time that if anyone wanted to speak to it, they could. Otherwise we would move on to seeing whether there's agreement with the motion.

A member: — Ask the question.

Chair Wotherspoon: — Ask the question? Should I read it again or just ask it? Do you guys want me to read it again or did everyone hear what was put? I'll read it just to make sure it's clear. This was moved by MLA Gordon. The motion reads:

> That the Standing Committee on Public Accounts, pursuant to subsection 16(1) of *The Provincial Auditor Act*, request that the Provincial Auditor perform a special assignment investigation to examine the actions, procedures, policies, and expenditures of the Global Transportation Hub and its recent attempt to negotiate a deal for the construction of a Costco store near Regina.

Members are ready for the question. So do members agree with the motion as read?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

Some Hon. Members: — No.

Chair Wotherspoon: — Those in favour of the motion please say aye.

Some Hon. Members: — Aye.

Chair Wotherspoon: — Those opposed to the motion please say no.

Some Hon. Members: — No.

Chair Wotherspoon: — The nos have it, so the motion would be defeated. Okay, moving along to our agenda items here. Okay, I guess there's a motion to go in camera for the first item. Oh right, the audit committee.

Hugh Gordon: — I move that the committee do now meet in camera.

Chair Wotherspoon: — All agreed?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

Chair Wotherspoon: — That's carried.

[The committee continued in camera from 09:29 until 09:37.]

Chair Wotherspoon: — Okay, welcome back out of our in camera discussion. I'd announce that the committee has made some decisions regarding the audit committee for this committee, and I'd recognize a member to move the following motion:

> That the Chair consult with the Standing Committee on Crown and Central Agencies prior to forwarding the audit committee member recommendations to the Speaker.

Joan Pratchler: — I so move.

Chair Wotherspoon: — Moved by MLA Pratchler. All agreed?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

Chair Wotherspoon: — Okay, that's carried. Okay. We're moving along here with the consideration of a motion for Commonwealth Association of Public Accounts Committees membership, CAPAC membership.

So as the Chair, I was approached by the CAAF, the Canadian Audit and Accountability Foundation, to serve as a representative from Canada for the CAPAC's executive committee. There's a desire to deepen the leadership role for Canada with the Commonwealth on this public accounts work. CAPAC is a

knowledge sharing group that supports the work of PACs [public accounts committee] across the Commonwealth.

In order to be part of the executive committee, first Saskatchewan would need to become a member of CAPAC. Members of CAPAC have access to resources to connect with PAC members and discuss topics of interest. I believe the organization plans a conference every two years, but there's no requirement to attend those conferences. If PAC decided it wanted to attend a conference, PAC members would need to agree to send members by way of a motion. So if it was anything formalized through this committee.

Any questions on this? Otherwise I would ask a member to move a motion with regard to applying for membership to CAPAC and to authorize the Chair to be its representative from Saskatchewan.

Sean Wilson: — I got it.

Chair Wotherspoon: — Okay. Moved by Deputy Chair Wilson. All agreed?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

Chair Wotherspoon: — That's carried.

Moving along here, we'll talk just a little bit about the CCPAC/CCOLA [Canadian Council of Public Accounts Committees/Canadian Council of Legislative Auditors] conference which we're hosting here in Regina, within the province here, from September 7th to 9th, 2025.

This is the annual conference that provides professional development and an opportunity to come together with every other province's public accounts committee, the territories', and the federal government's. So you have leadership and members from those public accounts committees that come together — that's your CCPAC portion — as well as with your Clerks that support that work.

And it's done in conjunction with the auditors from across Canada, the territories, and the federal government. That's the CCOLA portion. Some of the sessions are done jointly with both the auditors, the Clerks, and the public accounts members. Some are breakouts and focused more specifically on the public accounts aspect, or on the audit side as well.

We're hosting it here in Saskatchewan. It rotates throughout all the jurisdictions, so it's our turn once again. I want to thank the organizing committee for all their work. Our Clerk has worked very hard on this. Our auditor has been involved in this work. Obviously any time we're hosting we want to showcase this wonderful province in the best way possible. We've recently sent out a letter inviting members and public accounts and Clerks and auditors from across Canada. We've highlighted some of what our incredible province has to offer. Hopefully some folks decide to stick around and learn more about our great place.

We want to do a really good job of this. I do want to say thank you to the Clerk and that committee for their work, as well to our Deputy Chair for his work as a steering committee. We interact with that committee and, you know, offer a bit of direction or input as we go as well.

Members have copies of the preliminary conference program for delegates. As I've said, the steering committee has been working with the committee Clerk and the Office of the Provincial Auditor. Now typically the committee approves sending up to four committee members to the conference — usually two, the Chair and a member from the opposition, and then two members of the government's side, the Deputy Chair and someone else — so four members. But since it's here in Saskatchewan we'd like to have everyone there, because obviously it's affordable for us to access it here in Saskatchewan. We're not travelling the same way we would if we're going to BC [British Columbia] or Ontario or something for it. And it provides a really good learning opportunity for all members.

And then I would suggest as well as members of the PAC, that's of the host jurisdiction, we all can play a really nice role as well in just, you know, proudly showcasing our province and being a bit of a steward to the conference.

So I'd ask a member to move the following motion:

> That the Standing Committee on Public Accounts authorize the attendance of all Standing Committee on Public Accounts members at the Canadian Council of Public Accounts Committees, CCPAC, and the Canadian Council of Legislative Auditors, CCOLA, annual conference to be held in Regina, Saskatchewan from September 7th to 9th, 2025.

Brad Crassweller: — I'll make the motion.

Chair Wotherspoon: — The mover, MLA Crassweller, moves that motion. All agreed?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

Chair Wotherspoon: — Okay, that's carried as well. So mark that on your calendar, folks. It'll be a nice opportunity.

[09:45]

Okay, we'll move along to our final piece of business. You have the report that's been shared by our Clerk that details our activities as a committee between May 9th, 2024 and May 13th, 2025. Any discussion on the report, the annual report from our committee?

The Clerk puts together this report, and it simply details all of the work of this committee in that one-year period. Once moved, this would be presented to the Assembly.

Not seeing any discussion, but I don't want to rush folks if there is. There's nothing subjective in this report. It's simply a straightforward record of proceedings. Members care to have a little more time with it? Or are they ready to adopt it?

Okay, so it looks like there's no further questions here. Folks have given it a second look here. So since we're ready as a committee, I'd ask a member to move the following motion:

> That the first report of the Standing Committee on Public Accounts for the thirtieth legislature be adopted and presented to the Assembly.

Moved by MLA Crassweller. All agreed?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

Chair Wotherspoon: — Okay, that's carried. No other business on our agenda. Not seeing any other motions or anything, at this point I'd welcome a motion for adjournment. Moved by MLA Crassweller. Motion to adjourn. Is that carried?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

Chair Wotherspoon: — Okay, that's carried. It's agreed this committee stands adjourned to the call of the Chair.

[The committee adjourned at 09:48.]