

STANDING COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC ACCOUNTS
Tuesday, January 21, 2025

MINUTE NO. 3
9:07 a.m. — Legislative Chamber

1. **Present:** Trent Wotherspoon in the chair and members Chris Beaudry,* David Chan, Brad Crassweller, Hugh Gordon, Hon. Daryl Harrison, Barret Kropf,* and Joan Pratchler.

Substituting Members

Chris Beaudry for Hon. Daryl Harrison (2:41 p.m. – 3:32 p.m.)
Barret Kropf for Sean Wilson

Provincial Auditor's Office

Tara Clemett, Provincial Auditor
Victor Schwab, Deputy Provincial Auditor
Jason Shaw, Deputy Provincial Auditor
Trevor St. John, Deputy Provincial Auditor
Nicole Dressler, Principal
Michelle Lindenbach, Principal
Jennifer Robertson, Principal
Maro Ojaide, Senior Manager

Provincial Comptroller's Office

Chris Bayda, Provincial Comptroller
Jane Borland, Assistant Provincial Comptroller

2. The committee considered the Provincial Auditor's 2022 report volume 2, chapter 22, Saskatchewan Polytechnic — Carrying Out Applied Research.

The following Saskatchewan Polytechnic officials appeared before the committee and answered questions:

Witnesses

Larry Rosia, President and Chief Executive Officer
Jacquelynn Brown, Director, Finance and Administration
Deanna Kematch, Director, Indigenous Student Success

3. The following document was tabled:

Saskatchewan Polytechnic: status update, dated January 21, 2025

(PAC 11-30)

4. The committee concluded consideration of the Provincial Auditor's 2022 report volume 2, chapter 22, Saskatchewan Polytechnic — Carrying Out Applied Research.
5. The committee considered the Provincial Auditor's 2023 report volume 1, chapter 5, Saskatchewan Polytechnic — Supporting Success of Indigenous Students.

The following Saskatchewan Polytechnic officials appeared before the committee and answered questions:

Witnesses

Larry Rosia, President and Chief Executive Officer
Jacquelynn Brown, Director, Finance and Administration
Deanna Kematch, Director, Indigenous Student Success

6. The committee concurred with recommendation 1 made at page 70 of the Provincial Auditor's 2023 report volume 1, chapter 5, Saskatchewan Polytechnic — Supporting Success of Indigenous Students:

We recommend Saskatchewan Polytechnic regularly consult with Indigenous communities to obtain feedback on its strategies, and to report results on, Indigenous student success.

The committee noted that Saskatchewan Polytechnic is making progress towards complying with the recommendation.

7. The committee concurred with recommendation 2 made at page 73 of the Provincial Auditor's 2023 report volume 1, chapter 5, Saskatchewan Polytechnic — Supporting Success of Indigenous Students:

We recommend Saskatchewan Polytechnic verify the Indigenous identity of staff in Indigenous-designated positions.

The committee noted that Saskatchewan Polytechnic has complied with the recommendation.

8. The committee concurred with recommendation 3 made at page 74 of the Provincial Auditor's 2023 report volume 1, chapter 5, Saskatchewan Polytechnic — Supporting Success of Indigenous Students:

We recommend Saskatchewan Polytechnic enhance and report on key performance measures and targets specific to Indigenous student success.

The committee noted that Saskatchewan Polytechnic is making progress towards complying with the recommendation.

9. The committee concurred with recommendation 4 made at page 77 of the Provincial Auditor's 2023 report volume 1, chapter 5, Saskatchewan Polytechnic — Supporting Success of Indigenous Students:

We recommend Saskatchewan Polytechnic establish thresholds for when to investigate and take action on unexpected changes in key performance measures related to Indigenous student success.

The committee noted that Saskatchewan Polytechnic is making progress towards complying with the recommendation.

10. The committee recessed from 9:49 a.m. until 10:01 a.m.

11. The committee considered the Provincial Auditor's 2022 report volume 2, chapter 23, Saskatchewan Public Safety Agency — Coordinating Provincial Emergency Preparedness.

The following officials appeared before the committee and answered questions:

Witnesses

Ministry of Corrections, Policing and Public Safety

Denise Macza, Deputy Minister

Saskatchewan Public Safety Agency

Marlo Pritchard, President and Fire Commissioner

Laura Debassige, Vice-President, Corporate Services

Katherine McCannell, Director, Policy and Legislation

Allan Laird, Manager, Privacy Information Management

12. The following document was tabled:

Saskatchewan Public Safety Agency: status update, dated January 21, 2025

(PAC 12-30)

13. The committee concluded consideration of the Provincial Auditor's 2022 report volume 2, chapter 23, Saskatchewan Public Safety Agency — Coordinating Provincial Emergency Preparedness.

14. The committee considered the Provincial Auditor's 2023 report volume 2, chapter 27, Saskatchewan Public Safety Agency — Alerting the Public about Imminently Dangerous Events.

The following officials appeared before the committee and answered questions:

Witnesses

Ministry of Corrections, Policing and Public Safety

Denise Macza, Deputy Minister

Saskatchewan Public Safety Agency

Marlo Pritchard, President and Fire Commissioner

Laura Debassige, Vice-President, Corporate Services

Katherine McCannell, Director, Policy and Legislation

Allan Laird, Manager, Privacy Information Management

15. The committee concluded consideration of the Provincial Auditor's 2023 report volume 2, chapter 27, Saskatchewan Public Safety Agency — Alerting the Public about Imminently Dangerous Events.

16. The committee considered the Provincial Auditor's 2023 report volume 2, chapter 28, Saskatchewan Public Safety Agency — Detecting Wildfires.

The following officials appeared before the committee and answered questions:

Witnesses

Ministry of Corrections, Policing and Public Safety

Denise Macza, Deputy Minister

Saskatchewan Public Safety Agency

Marlo Pritchard, President and Fire Commissioner

Laura Debassige, Vice-President, Corporate Services

Katherine McCannell, Director, Policy and Legislation

Allan Laird, Manager, Privacy Information Management

17. The committee concluded consideration of the Provincial Auditor's 2023 report volume 2, chapter 28, Saskatchewan Public Safety Agency — Detecting Wildfires.

18. The committee recessed from 10:39 a.m. until 10:50 a.m.
19. The committee considered the Provincial Auditor's 2021 report volume 2, chapter 16, Justice and Attorney General — Coroners Service: Conducting Timely and Accurate Coroner Investigations and 2023 report volume 2, chapter 22, Justice and Attorney General — Conducting Timely and Accurate Coroners Investigations.

The following Ministry of Justice and Attorney General officials appeared before the committee and answered questions:

Witnesses

Kimberly Kratzig, Deputy Minister
Brad Gurash, Assistant Deputy Minister, Corporate Services
Rory Jensen, Assistant Deputy Minister, Courts and Community Justice
Jeff Wagner, Chief Coroner, Saskatchewan Coroners Service

20. The committee concurred with recommendation 1 made at page 115 of the Provincial Auditor's 2021 report volume 2, chapter 16, Justice and Attorney General — Coroners Service: Conducting Timely and Accurate Coroner Investigations:

We recommend the Ministry of Justice and Attorney General establish formal timelines for communicating coroner investigation results to families and making recommendations to agencies.

The committee noted that the Ministry of Justice and Attorney General has complied with the recommendation.

21. The committee concurred with recommendation 2 made at page 118 of the Provincial Auditor's 2021 report volume 2, chapter 16, Justice and Attorney General — Coroners Service: Conducting Timely and Accurate Coroner Investigations:

We recommend the Ministry of Justice and Attorney General routinely confirm coroners understand confidentiality and conflict of interest policies.

The committee noted that the Ministry of Justice and Attorney General has complied with the recommendation.

22. The committee concurred with recommendation 3 made at page 120 of the Provincial Auditor's 2021 report volume 2, chapter 16, Justice and Attorney General — Coroners Service: Conducting Timely and Accurate Coroner Investigations:

We recommend the Ministry of Justice and Attorney General consistently complete timely coroner investigations and reports.

The committee noted that the Ministry of Justice and Attorney General has complied with the recommendation.

23. The committee concurred with recommendation 4 made at page 121 of the Provincial Auditor's 2021 report volume 2, chapter 16, Justice and Attorney General — Coroners Service: Conducting Timely and Accurate Coroner Investigations:

We recommend the Ministry of Justice and Attorney General conduct timely review of coroner investigation files and reports before issuing coroner reports.

The committee noted that the Ministry of Justice and Attorney General has complied with the recommendation.

24. The committee concurred with recommendation 5 made at page 122 of the Provincial Auditor's 2021 report volume 2, chapter 16, Justice and Attorney General — Coroners Service: Conducting Timely and Accurate Coroner Investigations:

We recommend the Ministry of Justice and Attorney General perform timely follow up to determine implementation of coroner recommendations to improve public safety.

The committee noted that the Ministry of Justice and Attorney General has complied with the recommendation.

25. The committee concurred with recommendation 6 made at page 122 of the Provincial Auditor's 2021 report volume 2, chapter 16, Justice and Attorney General — Coroners Service: Conducting Timely and Accurate Coroner Investigations:

We recommend the Ministry of Justice and Attorney General centrally log Coroners Service complaints and actions taken to resolve them.

The committee noted that the Ministry of Justice and Attorney General has complied with the recommendation.

26. The committee concurred with recommendation 7 made at page 123 of the Provincial Auditor's 2021 report volume 2, chapter 16, Justice and Attorney General — Coroners Service: Conducting Timely and Accurate Coroner Investigations:

We recommend the Ministry of Justice and Attorney General analyze death investigation data (e.g., location, manner, cause) to inform coroner recommendations to improve public safety.

The committee noted that the Ministry of Justice and Attorney General has complied with the recommendation.

27. The committee concurred with recommendation 8 made at page 123 of the Provincial Auditor's 2021 report volume 2, chapter 16, Justice and Attorney General — Coroners Service: Conducting Timely and Accurate Coroner Investigations:

We recommend the Ministry of Justice and Attorney General regularly report on its Coroners Service activities and results to senior management.

The committee noted that the Ministry of Justice and Attorney General has complied with the recommendation.

28. The committee concluded consideration of the Provincial Auditor's 2023 report volume 2, chapter 22, Justice and Attorney General — Conducting Timely and Accurate Coroners Investigations.

29. The committee considered the Provincial Auditor's 2024 report volume 1, chapter 15, Justice and Attorney General — Supporting Provincial Court of Saskatchewan to Manage Court Workloads.

The following Ministry of Justice and Attorney General officials appeared before the committee and answered questions:

Witnesses

Kimberly Kratzig, Deputy Minister
Brad Gurash, Assistant Deputy Minister, Corporate Services
Rory Jensen, Assistant Deputy Minister, Courts and Community Justice
Jeff Wagner, Chief Coroner, Saskatchewan Coroners Service

30. The committee concluded consideration of the Provincial Auditor's 2024 report volume 1, chapter 15, Justice and Attorney General — Supporting Provincial Court of Saskatchewan to Manage Court Workloads.

31. The following document was tabled:

Ministry of Justice and Attorney General: status update, dated January 21, 2025

(PAC 13-30)

32. The committee recessed from 12:10 p.m. until 1:03 p.m.

33. The committee considered the Provincial Auditor's 2023 report volume 1, chapter 1, Government Relations — Northern Municipal Trust Account; 2023 report volume 2, chapter 3, Government Relations — Northern Municipal Trust Account; and 2024 report volume 2, chapter 3, Government Relations — Northern Municipal Trust Account.

The following Ministry of Government Relations officials appeared before the committee and answered questions:

Witnesses

Laurier Donais, Deputy Minister
Bonnie Chambers, Assistant Deputy Minister, Municipal Relations
Jeff Markewich, Assistant Deputy Minister, Central Services and Standards
Heather Evans, Executive Director, Corporate Services
Brad Henry, Executive Director, Northern Municipal Services

34. The following document was tabled:

Ministry of Government Relations: status update, dated January 21, 2025

(PAC 14-30)

35. The committee concurred with recommendation 1 made at page 18 of the Provincial Auditor's 2023 report volume 1, chapter 1, Government Relations — Northern Municipal Trust Account:

We recommend the Ministry of Government Relations regularly update its cost estimates to decommission landfills under the Northern Municipal Trust Account's responsibility.

The committee noted that the Ministry of Government Relations has complied with the recommendation.

36. The committee concurred with recommendation 1 made at page 27 of the Provincial Auditor's 2023 report volume 2, chapter 3, Government Relations — Northern Municipal Trust Account:

We recommend the Ministry of Government Relations obtain the necessary information to adopt Canadian Public Sector Accounting Standard 3280 – Asset Retirement Obligations for the year ending December 31, 2023.

The committee noted that the Ministry of Government Relations has complied with the recommendation.

37. The committee concluded consideration of the Provincial Auditor's 2024 report volume 2, chapter 3, Government Relations — Northern Municipal Trust Account.
38. The committee considered the Provincial Auditor's 2024 report volume 1, chapter 11, Government Relations — Providing Safe Drinking Water in Northern Settlements.

The following Ministry of Government Relations officials appeared before the committee and answered questions:

Witnesses

Laurier Donais, Deputy Minister
Bonnie Chambers, Assistant Deputy Minister, Municipal Relations
Jeff Markewich, Assistant Deputy Minister, Central Services and Standards
Heather Evans, Executive Director, Corporate Services
Brad Henry, Executive Director, Northern Municipal Services

39. The committee concluded consideration of the Provincial Auditor's 2024 report volume 1, chapter 11, Government Relations — Providing Safe Drinking Water in Northern Settlements.
40. The committee recessed from 1:41 p.m. until 1:52 p.m.
41. The committee considered the Provincial Auditor's 2022 report volume 2, chapter 25, Western Development Museum — Permanently Removing Historical Artifacts.

The following officials appeared before the committee and answered questions:

Witnesses

Ministry of Parks, Culture and Sport
Greg Gettle, Deputy Minister
Dan French, Assistant Deputy Minister
Western Development Museum
Joan Kanigan, Chief Executive Officer

42. The following document was tabled:

Western Development Museum: status update, dated January 21, 2025

(PAC 15-30)

43. The committee concluded consideration of the Provincial Auditor's 2022 report volume 2, chapter 25, Western Development Museum — Permanently Removing Historical Artifacts.

44. The committee considered the Provincial Auditor's 2023 report volume 2, chapter 10, Western Development Museum and 2024 report volume 2, chapter 10, Western Development Museum.

The following officials appeared before the committee and answered questions:

Witnesses

Ministry of Parks, Culture and Sport

Greg Gettle, Deputy Minister

Dan French, Assistant Deputy Minister

Western Development Museum

Joan Kanigan, Chief Executive Officer

45. The committee concurred with recommendation 1 made at page 66 of the Provincial Auditor's 2023 report volume 2, chapter 10, Western Development Museum:

We recommend the Western Development Museum require management to conduct a detailed review of financial information (e.g., financial reports, journal entries, bank reconciliations) prepared by staff.

The committee noted that the Western Development Museum has complied with the recommendation.

46. The committee concurred with recommendation 2 made at page 67 of the Provincial Auditor's 2023 report volume 2, chapter 10, Western Development Museum:

We recommend the Western Development Museum require management complete a full review of its year-end financial statements.

The committee noted that the Western Development Museum has complied with the recommendation.

47. The committee concluded consideration of the Provincial Auditor's 2024 report volume 2, chapter 10, Western Development Museum.

48. The committee recessed from 2:13 p.m. until 2:40 p.m.

49. The committee considered the Provincial Auditor's 2023 report volume 2, chapter 12, Agriculture — Conserving Agricultural Crown Land.

The following Ministry of Agriculture officials appeared before the committee and answered questions:

Witnesses

Bill Greuel, Deputy Minister

Dianna Emperingham, Executive Director, Lands

Helen Rud, Director, Lands

Barbara Ziesman, Director, Crops and Irrigation

50. The following document was tabled:

Ministry of Agriculture: status update, dated January 21, 2025

(PAC 16-30)

51. The committee concurred with recommendation 1 made at page 80 of the Provincial Auditor's 2023 report volume 2, chapter 12, Agriculture — Conserving Agricultural Crown Land:

We recommend the Ministry of Agriculture track all critical habitat on Crown land it is responsible for in its IT system.

The committee noted that the Ministry of Agriculture has complied with the recommendation.

52. The committee concurred with recommendation 2 made at page 84 of the Provincial Auditor's 2023 report volume 2, chapter 12, Agriculture — Conserving Agricultural Crown Land:

We recommend the Ministry of Agriculture formalize factors it considers when determining which Indigenous communities to consult with when proposing the lease or sale of Crown land.

The committee noted that the Ministry of Agriculture is making progress towards complying with the recommendation.

53. The committee concurred with recommendation 3 made at page 87 of the Provincial Auditor's 2023 report volume 2, chapter 12, Agriculture — Conserving Agricultural Crown Land:

We recommend the Ministry of Agriculture complete baseline range health assessments of pasture association leases.

The committee noted that the Ministry of Agriculture is making progress towards complying with the recommendation.

54. The committee concurred with recommendation 4 made at page 87 of the Provincial Auditor's 2023 report volume 2, chapter 12, Agriculture — Conserving Agricultural Crown Land:

We recommend the Ministry of Agriculture communicate the results of range health assessments to pasture associations timely.

The committee noted that the Ministry of Agriculture has complied with the recommendation.

55. The committee concurred with recommendation 5 made at page 88 of the Provincial Auditor's 2023 report volume 2, chapter 12, Agriculture — Conserving Agricultural Crown Land:

We recommend the Ministry of Agriculture make implementation of key recommendations to lessees in range health assessments mandatory and set consequences for non-compliance.

The committee noted that the Ministry of Agriculture has complied with the recommendation.

56. The committee concurred with recommendation 6 made at page 89 of the Provincial Auditor's 2023 report volume 2, chapter 12, Agriculture — Conserving Agricultural Crown Land:

We recommend the Ministry of Agriculture conduct timely inspections on individually-leased Crown land and centrally track results.

The committee noted that the Ministry of Agriculture is making progress towards complying with the recommendation.

57. The committee concurred with recommendation 7 made at page 90 of the Provincial Auditor's 2023 report volume 2, chapter 12, Agriculture — Conserving Agricultural Crown Land:

We recommend the Ministry of Agriculture monitor the implementation of range health assessment recommendations and required actions from lease utilization plans.

The committee noted that the Ministry of Agriculture has complied with the recommendation.

58. The committee concurred with recommendation 8 made at page 90 of the Provincial Auditor's 2023 report volume 2, chapter 12, Agriculture — Conserving Agricultural Crown Land:

We recommend the Ministry of Agriculture track and evaluate trends of non-compliance it observes when completing range health assessments or inspections.

The committee noted that the Ministry of Agriculture is making progress towards complying with the recommendation.

59. The committee considered the Provincial Auditor's 2023 report volume 2, chapter 17, Agriculture — Mitigating Pests in Crops and Pastures.

The following Ministry of Agriculture officials appeared before the committee and answered questions:

Witnesses

Bill Greuel, Deputy Minister

Dianna Emperingham, Executive Director, Lands

Helen Rud, Director, Lands

Barbara Ziesman, Director, Crops and Irrigation

60. The committee concluded consideration of the Provincial Auditor's 2023 report volume 2, chapter 17, Agriculture — Mitigating Pests in Crops and Pastures.

61. The committee recessed from 3:23 p.m. until 3:33 p.m.

62. The committee considered the Provincial Auditor's 2022 report volume 2, chapter 7, Summary of Implemented Recommendations and 2023 report volume 2, chapter 11, Summary of Implemented Recommendations.

63. The committee concluded consideration of the Provincial Auditor's 2022 report volume 2, chapter 7, Summary of Implemented Recommendations and 2023 report volume 2, chapter 11, Summary of Implemented Recommendations.

64. The committee considered the Provincial Auditor's 2021 report volume 2, chapter 1, COVID-19 Financial Support Programs.

65. The committee concluded consideration of the Provincial Auditor's 2021 report volume 2, chapter 1, COVID-19 Financial Support Programs.

66. The committee considered the Provincial Auditor's 2022 report volume 2, chapter 27, Standing Committee on Public Accounts; 2023 report volume 2, chapter 32, Standing Committee on Public Accounts; and 2024 report volume 2, chapter 33, Standing Committee on Public Accounts.

67. The committee concluded consideration of the Provincial Auditor's 2022 report volume 2, chapter 27, Standing Committee on Public Accounts; 2023 report volume 2, chapter 32, Standing Committee on Public Accounts; and 2024 report volume 2, chapter 33, Standing Committee on Public Accounts.

68. It was moved by Barret Kropf:

That this committee do now adjourn.

The question being put, it was agreed to.

69. The committee adjourned at 4:06 p.m. until Wednesday, January 22, 2025 at 8:30 a.m.

Danielle Humble-Selinger
Committee Clerk

Trent Wotherspoon
Chair