



Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan

BOARD OF INTERNAL ECONOMY

MINUTES AND VERBATIM REPORT

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Speaker**



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**BOARD OF INTERNAL ECONOMY
2002**

Hon. P. Myron Kowalsky, Chair
Prince Albert Carlton

Dan D'Autremont
Cannington

Doreen Hamilton
Regina Wascana Plains

Hon. Glenn Hagel
Moose Jaw North

Carolyn Jones
Saskatoon Meewasin

Arlene Julé
Humboldt

Hon. Ron Osika
Melville

BOARD OF INTERNAL ECONOMY

Teleconference

9:00 a.m. December 19, 2002

Present: Members of the Board of Internal Economy

Hon. P. Myron Kowalsky, Chair
Mr. Dan D'Autremont
Ms. Doreen Hamilton
Hon. Glenn Hagel
Ms. Arlene Julé
Ms. Carolyn Jones

Staff to the Board

Marilyn Borowski, Director, Financial Services
Gwenn Ronyk, Clerk
Margaret Kleisinger, Secretary

Legislative Assembly Officials

Ms. Margaret Woods, Clerk Assistant

ITEM 1 Decision Item: Special Warrant Request for the Office of the Information and Privacy Commissioner

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

That a Special Warrant in the amount of \$31,000 be approved for the Office of the Information and Privacy Commissioner.

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

Minute #1555

ITEM 2 Decision Item: Request from Standing Committee on Public Accounts

The Chair read the letter of request from Mr. Ken Krawetz, Chair of the Standing Committee on Public Accounts requesting funding to attend the *International Conference on Emerging Issues for Public Accounts Committees* in Melbourne, Australia.

A debate arising and the question being put, it was negatived.

Minute #1556

ITEM 3 Information Item: Dissolution Guidelines

The Speaker gave notice that the Dissolution Guidelines will be reviewed at the next meeting of the Board of Internal Economy and requested that Financial Services distribute copies of the draft guidelines to all Members.

ITEM 4 The Speaker gave notice that the next meeting of the Board of Internal Economy will be held February 26, 2003 beginning at 9:00 a.m.

The meeting adjourned at 9:33 a.m.

The board met at 09:00.

The Chair: — So I think if *Hansard* is ready to go, I'll call the meeting to order. Thank you for responding to the meeting. I have on the agenda four items. Two are decision items and two are simply information items. The decision items are the special warrant request which I mailed out — just distributed just yesterday, and I've got three letters back — and then a request from Public Accounts Committee.

I would ask that the members speak and respond to any of these items today, that the first thing you do is identify yourself so that *Hansard* will know who it is that's speaking because they don't have the visual reference at this time.

And so just carrying on first of all with the special warrant request. I received three responses to date and which . . . but I wanted to just put it on the agenda at the request of Dan D'Autremont because I think maybe you might have had a comment so . . . I don't know, Dan, maybe I'll turn it over to you.

Mr. D'Autremont: — Dan D'Autremont here.

Ms. Julé: — Hi, Dan.

Mr. D'Autremont: — Good morning, Arlene.

Ms. Julé: — Good morning.

The Chair: — I've just outlined the agenda, Arlene, and Dan is going to speak to agenda item 1.

Ms. Julé: — All right. Go ahead.

Mr. D'Autremont: — I just thought that it was appropriate because there was more than one item to discuss with the Board of Internal Economy that we should hold a quick conference call to discuss these issues. On the decision item on the Privacy Commissioner, I believe it is, the \$10,000 requested for him, that's for staffing his office, is it not?

The Chair: — The request in the letter was for rental of office space and provision of secretarial services, \$10,000.

Mr. D'Autremont: — Right, yes. I just wasn't sure about the secretarial staff. What's happened in the past? How much was allocated to that?

The Chair: — My recollection is . . . Gwenn, you might be able to help out here.

Ms. Ronyk: — Yes, Marilyn is here.

The Chair: — Flat fee.

Ms. Ronyk: — Our last year's estimate for the Information Commissioner . . . If you recall at that point it was a shared office between the Conflict Commissioner and the Information Commissioner office, and it was due to the separation of those offices that the . . . we now have two office spaces to rent, and the same salary for each of the officers.

Last year the amount for the Information Commissioner office space was \$25,200, and now we're asking for an additional, additional 10 because of the separation. They are no longer sharing the same offices. That's for this year, this current year.

Mr. D'Autremont: — All right. Do you have any idea how the breakdown — Dan speaking again — any idea how the breakdown goes between secretarial and accommodation? Or we might need the commissioner here to interpret that.

Ms. Ronyk: — Marilyn can respond to that, if that's okay, Mr. Speaker.

The Chair: — Yes, please.

Ms. Borowski: — Marilyn speaking. We pay . . . it's a contractual services to the law firm where the office is, and they provide Mr. Rendek with reception services. And it's all part of the contract that they have so, no, there is no breakdown between how much exactly is for office space and how much is for secretarial. It's basically office services that we're paying.

Mr. D'Autremont: — Is there a corresponding reduction in the other position for rent and accommodations and services?

Ms. Borowski: — Yes, there was a reduction. Mr. Gerrand, once he resigned as the Information and Privacy Commissioner, then he renegotiated his contract for providing office services for only the Conflict of Interest Commissioner. So, yes, there was a reduction.

Mr. D'Autremont: — Okay, that was the information I was concerned with.

The Chair: — Anybody else have any comments on this item, this special warrant request?

Ms. Hamilton: — This is until the end of this year and this is an additional 10,000 until the end of March or until the end of December? It's Doreen speaking.

Ms. Borowski: — Marilyn speaking. Again, it's for the remainder of the fiscal year. So to March 31, 2003.

Ms. Hamilton: — Thank you.

Ms. Julé: — Myron, when was it that . . .

The Chair: — This is Arlene speaking?

Ms. Julé: — Yes, this is Arlene. When was it that Mr. Gerrand indicated that he didn't want to take on the combination of these two?

The Chair: — The question is . . . Can somebody answer that question?

Mr. D'Autremont: — Well, if I can interrupt. Dan here. When McLeod was the commissioner he was doing both of the jobs and he was recommending at the time that both of the positions be split into two separate people. And then when Mr. Gerrand came on he agreed with that. So he resigned one of the

positions, forcing the issue.

The Chair: — Any other comments or questions? Do we need a motion then on this, Gwenn? I know I was originally asking just for people to sign off on a letter.

Hon. Mr. Hagel: — Well I would say now that you've called a meeting and put it to the meeting, we need a motion. I'll move it. It's Glenn.

The Chair: — Move by Glenn:

That the Board of Internal Economy submit the request for a special warrant in the amount of \$31,000 to the cabinet.

Ms. Jones: — I'll second it.

The Chair: — Seconded, thank you. Any other comments?

Ms. Ronyk: — Mr. Speaker, Gwenn here. The special warrants from the board do not go to cabinet. They go to the Department of Finance and Treasury Board, I guess.

The Chair: — Yes, so the motion then would read to . . .

Ms. Ronyk: — To Treasury Board.

The Chair: — . . . to Treasury Board. Thank you. All in favour? Any opposed?

Ms. Ronyk: — Did you have a seconder?

Ms. Jones: — Yes, Carolyn.

Ms. Ronyk: — Okay.

The Chair: — Thank you very much. Motion is carried.

The second item is a decision item that's a request from Public Accounts. I'm not sure if you have before you that request but I'll read the letter that I received from Ken Krawetz, Chair of the Standing Committee on Public Accounts.

The Standing Committee on Public Accounts has received an invitation from the chairman of the Australasian Council of Public Accounts Committees to attend the International Conference on Emerging issues for Public Accounts Committees and similar type Committees.

The conference will take place in Melbourne, Australia next February 2 to 5, year 2003. The invitation was discussed by members of the Public Accounts Committee at its meeting on December 17. Several members expressed interest in attending, believing that the conference agenda presented a valuable opportunity to discuss public accountability and governance issues with their international colleagues.

The committee subsequently agreed to the following motion: (Here is the motion.)

That the Standing Committee on Public Accounts

authorize the attendance of the Chair and Vice-Chair at the International Conference on Emerging issues for Public Accounts Committees and similar type Committees to be held in Melbourne, Australia, February 2-5, 2003.

And further, that if the Chair or Vice-Chair cannot attend, they be authorized to designate another committee member to attend in their place.

As the invitation had not been received at the time the budget was first approved by the Board of Internal Economy, no provision was included to fund attendance at the conference. Accordingly, the committee is now seeking approval. I would therefore ask that the request be brought before the Board of Internal Economy at the earliest opportunity.

Signed Ken Krawetz, Chair of the Standing Committee on Public Accounts.

And they have included the agenda and the three, the three key themes are the relationship between public accountability and governance, the future public sector management challenges and financial risks, and public governance and the role of public accounts committees. It looks like the agenda is good.

The cost items: the registration fee of \$400 Australian; hotel cost about, the Grand Hyatt is 175 Australian or there's another one here for 120 Australian; and the cost of flights, I would just approximate this, but I would suggest it would be around \$3,000 per person.

So we're open for discussion here to respond . . .

Hon. Mr. Hagel: — What's the request for? What's the dollar total?

The Chair: — So the dollar total . . . I haven't got a dollar total but my estimate would be, per person, 3,000 travel, 400 for registration, and then if we're looking at four days at 175 plus, well let's put it about 225 a day for costs or maybe 200 a day would be easier to work with.

Mr. D'Autremont: — About 1,000 bucks.

The Chair: — About \$1,000 there. So we're looking at about . . .

Mr. D'Autremont: — That's Australian money. That works out to 600 Canadian.

The Chair: — We're about \$4,400.

Hon. Mr. Hagel: — It's about a \$9,000 request.

The Chair: — Yes, about that.

Ms. Hamilton: — Did the . . .

The Chair: — Who is this, please?

Ms. Hamilton: — It's Doreen Hamilton speaking. Did the

Clerk's office do any looking at, is this money available within our budget? Is this another special warrant request? And did we get a follow-up request from Crown Corporations Committee?

The Chair: — Could you identify, Gwenn, as to how this money is divided up, where it would come from? Part is budgetary and part is statutory.

Ms. Ronyk: — Yes, it's Gwenn. Yes, I can speak to that. The travel funding to send members of Public Accounts Committee or a Crown Corps Committee, for that matter, would come out of the committee budget on the statutory side, the members' expense side. Therefore no special warrant would be required to fund it.

Also, I can report that there is sufficient unexpended money in that budget if the board did wish to approve. We still feel they need the approval because it was not a planned event, but the funding is there.

Ms. Hamilton: — Would there be funding if this same request came from the Crown Corporations Committee as well?

Ms. Ronyk: — Yes.

Ms. Hamilton: — So that would be an additional two reps probably there, but I think that would require another meeting. This is Doreen speaking again.

Ms. Ronyk: — Yes, as I understand it — this is Gwenn — the Crown Corporations Committee has not addressed it at a committee meeting although an inquiry has been made by the Chair.

Ms. Hamilton: — Okay.

Mr. D'Autremont: — The only . . .

Ms. Hamilton: — Thank you.

Mr. D'Autremont: — Go ahead, Doreen.

Ms. Hamilton: — No, that's fine, thanks.

Ms. Julé: — It's Arlene here. Is that . . . Doreen, your comments seem to suggest that there would be an interest, obviously, in some of the members in Crown Corporations. Does that mean that there could be possibly four people going on the same trip? Is that what it's looking like right now?

Ms. Hamilton: — There hasn't been a formal request. I just heard an interest because of the agenda dealing with the oversight of public . . . I'd imagine that would speak to Crowns or publicly run, funded organizations.

The Chair: — Now, Gwenn, is there a cost item also to the budgetary side?

Ms. Ronyk: — There would be if a committee staff member went. Then that would be a cost on the budgetary side. But if they do not go, then the expenses would all be statutory.

Now when I say statutory that means that it's still money that

will affect the government's bottom line overall, it's just that it doesn't need a special approval for it. It is there in our budget and if it's not used it will revert to the government's bottom line.

The Chair: — And if we were to send a staff member, would we be able to accommodate that?

Ms. Ronyk: — It looks . . .

The Chair: — Or are we getting pretty tight there?

Ms. Ronyk: — It looks very doubtful . . .

The Chair: — A private member.

Ms. Ronyk: — . . . at this time.

Hon. Mr. Hagel: — This is Glenn here. Regardless of which side it's on — excuse me, still fighting a cold here — regardless of which side of the budget it's on, still the bottom line is that it's still real money. And I think just given the current fiscal circumstances that we have, that although the subject sounds legitimate to me, I certainly can't support these recommendation . . . or the request, I should say.

The Chair: — Anybody else on it?

Ms. Julé: — I would agree. Are you saying that you can't support the request of the staff member, Glenn?

Hon. Mr. Hagel: — No, of the conference, the whole . . . the original, the 9,000. Regardless of whether there's any additional, I just can't support the \$9,000 request.

Ms. Jones: — Which could be 18. This is Carolyn speaking. Is that right?

The Chair: — Well, no, it would be 9,000 for two members.

Ms. Jones: — Yes, but if we received a similar request.

Hon. Mr. Hagel: — What we have before us right now is . . . to decide on at the moment here, is the \$9,000 request because there's no request in it . . . there's no Crown Corporations. However, just with what's before us right now, I can't support it.

The Chair: — If there's no other comments, do you wish to make that into a motion?

Ms. Julé: — Just a minute. What I'm kind of . . . if I could ask Gwenn just . . . I'll comment for a minute on this. Gwenn, you mention that there is money in that pool of money for this kind of thing. So I'm trying to reconcile Glenn's comments with yours here, Glenn's concerns with the fact that you mention there's money there. I can't understand what Glenn's concerns might be.

Ms. Hamilton: — It's Doreen speaking. I can speak to the concern I have about that, being that this is going to be a trip in February, just at a time where I don't think it would be a secret that budgets look fairly bleak because of the drought and the

farm scene; that I've always been schooled that if you can put this request on the door of your office and have everyone agree. And I'm not certain that I'd like to stick this in Balgonie's office door and say, let's send people to Australia in February.

So I'm going to support Glenn on that but those are the reasons I have, and it's Doreen speaking.

Mr. D'Autremont: — Dan here. The monies that you say are available, Gwenn, were budgeted for travel, were they not?

Ms. Ronyk: — They're budgeted from members' committee expenses which includes travel to committee events, committee meetings.

Mr. D'Autremont: — So while every dollar that is spent in government, no matter what it's spent for, is real money, these expenses were already allocated, foreseeing travel with some committee, not necessarily Public Accounts but any one of these committees of the legislature. So the agreement had been made when the budgets were passed last spring that this travel was authorized. Now I understand that circumstances . . .

The Chair: — I believe the situation there is that there was a certain amount budgeted for various committees and some committees have underspent.

Mr. D'Autremont: — Right.

Ms. Ronyk: — That's correct.

Mr. D'Autremont: — But the concept of spending the money on travel and members' expenses or such was contemplated at that time and authorized. Is that not correct?

Ms. Ronyk: — Yes.

Mr. D'Autremont: — So this is not a . . . while it's a new request from Public Accounts, it's not a new request in the sense that this travel was unexpected. It was travel that was expected to a committee someplace. Would that be fair to say?

Ms. Hamilton: — I think it would be fair to say. But I think you would be expecting that if a committee had to travel to say, events in the province or outside of the province. This one we're obviously considering as a special request.

The Chair: — That was Doreen.

Mr. D'Autremont: — Yes, it's a special request in the same sense though as any request coming from a committee to travel. They're all special . . . considered a special request at budget time as separate items and approvals are given and there's a . . . You don't have a pool per se of unclaimed money, you might say, at budget time. They're allocated for committee travel.

Was this money allocated to any particular committee prior to this, Gwenn, or is it just pooled for committee travel?

Ms. Ronyk: — No, the budget does allocate it by committee.

Mr. D'Autremont: — So the money was expected to have been spent by one of the committees — whichever one of the

committees that had requested it. That committee has now come in under budget, which is good, but we have a new request now from another committee of the legislature requesting utilization of that money.

And I think most of us would agree that the value of public accounts scrutiny is there and that it's incumbent on our members to know and understand that to the maximum amount possible. And I see this as an opportunity for two of the members of the committee — I believe that's what they're requesting is travel for two — to certainly gain more insight in how it is done in other areas and how it impacts on the public's perception of accountability.

I know the Australian system is, while somewhat different than ours, has the same goals in mind and the same objectives, and in large part proceed in a somewhat similar manner. And I think there are avenues to be learned, things to be gained by looking at systems that operate slightly differently, that have different emphasis, that utilize the role of the committees in a different manner. And I think it's worth our while to gain an understanding, a working knowledge of them.

It's one thing that we found on the Rules and Procedures Committee, it's one thing to look at the book, at the information provided as to what committees are available, theoretically what their role is. It's another thing to find out how they actually operate. And I think we only have to look at our own legislature to understand that.

We have a list of about 15 committees. Things like the Standing Committee on Education, it has a good mandate. Unfortunately it hasn't met in how many decades. I suppose somebody looking at these things from the outside thinks this is a very good system until you get inside of it and find out it doesn't work.

So I think it's important that we do take a look at what's happening in other jurisdictions, not just on the theory side but to find out actually how it works and if it does work. And that's the end of my speech.

The Chair: — Okay. Would somebody care to make a motion?

Ms. Jones: — Well I just want to . . . this is Carolyn speaking. And I recall our last budget-setting Board of Internal Economy meeting when we went through a quite extensive process of having to pare down a lot of budget. It was not an easy task that we went through, and I expect that the same process will happen when we next meet to determine the budgets of various legislative departments.

And I would . . . therefore, it would be my opinion that because we're anticipating yet another difficult task in allocating appropriate amounts of money to ensure that legislators here at home are able to do their job and develop professionally that we could, if there is money available . . . I mean, it's been set aside but it's still money that needs to be spent, leaving less money perhaps for another year and another legitimate committee purpose.

So I would speak against adding a trip at this time when we don't know yet what the budgets are going to be for next year's

trips that also will have legitimate and meaningful purposes for legislators in this province. So I would discourage us from approving this special request.

The Chair: — I would thank both members for their speeches and I would request a motion on somebody's part.

Ms. Julé: — Well it's Arlene. I would make a motion that we approve this.

The Chair: — Moved by Arlene Julé that this item be approved, the item from Public Accounts Committee be approved. Is there a seconder?

Mr. D'Autremont: — I'll second it.

The Chair: — Seconded by Dan. Now for a vote on this. Please, I would ask each to identify your vote and whether you're voting . . . your name and whether you're voting for or against the motion. The motion is:

That the request from Public Accounts Committee be approved.

Arlene, do you want to start?

Ms. Julé: — Yes, my . . . Hello?

The Chair: — Yes.

Ms. Julé: — Yes, I'm sorry. I just . . . somehow I missed what you said, Mr. Speaker.

The Chair: — I just want you to state your name and whether you're voting for or against the motion.

Ms. Julé: — Arlene Julé, for.

Mr. D'Autremont: — Dan D'Autremont, for.

Hon. Mr. Hagel: — Glenn Hagel, against.

Ms. Hamilton: — Doreen Hamilton, against.

Ms. Jones: — Carolyn Jones, against.

The Chair: — The count is three against and two for. The motion is defeated. I think that's all we need then on that item, and I thank you for your discussion.

Item 3.

Hon. Mr. Hagel: — Myron, Glenn here. I will have to be leaving the call here in about five to eight minutes or so.

The Chair: — All right. I should be done by then.

Hon. Mr. Hagel: — Okay.

The Chair: — Item 3 is simply an information item. Everybody's . . . The board members have received the proposed dissolution guidelines. I expect that what I'll do is leave it open for people to come up with suggestions and

amendments so that we can deal with it at the next meeting.

And I have received to date, for example, one request that it . . . for a change. It has to do with the coverage of the signage. I'm not sure how to handle that exactly but I know that the original request for that particular dissolution guideline, that any member's sign that's in front of their constituency office be covered during the writ period . . . and that came directly from the Chief Electoral Officer, just for your information.

So that's all I have on item 3. So please pass on to your caucus members that we will be making that decision at our next meeting.

And item 4 is simply notice of meeting. It's going to be on Wednesday, February 26, 9 a.m. to 9 p.m. or whatever . . . or whenever business concludes but it usually takes us a day. And that will be the budgetary meeting.

Ms. Hamilton: — Myron, it's Doreen Hamilton here. On the dissolution guidelines, I heard a number of comments on the coverage of sign. I know when an election is called, you know, it's to turn your key on your office, walk away, and start doing the work that you need to do in that period.

To try and find someone who either can take down a sign, particularly larger signs in a city, is a . . . could be a difficult thing. If you can drape it in what, black crepe paper or whatever you're going to cover it with, you're not perhaps going to receive the approval of your mall site to do that. That's going to be one that I heard from a number of places would be very difficult.

The other one I heard was people who are living outside of the city, when they have rental accommodation in an apartment building or something outside of a . . . perhaps a friend or a private accommodation, it's very difficult to not pay for a whole month. You sign your lease for a month-by-month arrangement. And I think we should look at for those individuals to have consistency. There's another section that allows for that to happen the month of the call, that the entire month would be paid for rather than prorated. Those were the two things I heard in comment when they were passed out.

The Chair: — Okay. Well, we've got them on record now so we'll be able to consider them. And I will also look to see if there's any alternatives that might be presented before approval.

Ms. Julé: — Yes, and just . . . it's Arlene here. Just incidentally, Doreen, I have had the same request for consideration of the full month of rent being paid . . . (inaudible) . . . for discussion, I guess, at the next meeting.

Hon. Mr. Hagel: — Yes, this is Glenn here. Similarly for myself. So I think we're going to have some things we're going to want to discuss, and I think what we want to do is come to the meeting making sure that we've had a chance to get input from all of our caucus colleagues.

And now is someone going to be . . . Mr. Speaker, has someone made sure that the independent member has these as well and has opportunity for input?

The Chair: — I'm sure.

Hon. Mr. Hagel: — Okay.

The Chair: — I'm sure that's gone out.

Hon. Mr. Hagel: — Okay. I'm trying to just make sure that that's being done because we . . . I think when we get to the meeting we'll want to reflect the input from all of the MLAs (Member of the Legislative Assembly) of the House.

The Chair: — Okay.

Hon. Mr. Hagel: — I should tell you as well, Mr. Speaker, I don't know whether I'm available the morning of the 26th. I just looked at my calendar here when you said . . . gave us the date, and it looks as though I'm out of town for at least the morning of that day. But we'll . . . I don't know that anybody has been checking with offices but . . .

The Chair: — Well no, I think . . . I was assuming that my staff had checked with the offices prior to giving me this date.

Hon. Mr. Hagel: — Yes, I just don't know how . . . I know I've got a . . . My calendar has a commitment out of town. I don't know how strong it is and we'll have to check that.

The Chair: — I'll get them to double-check that, okay?

Hon. Mr. Hagel: — Yes, okay.

The Chair: — Okay. Thank you all very much. I'll talk to you, and Merry Christmas.

Hon. Mr. Hagel: — Merry Christmas to everybody. Have a good break, you guys. Merry Christmas.

The board adjourned at 09:33.

