



Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan

BOARD OF INTERNAL ECONOMY

MINUTES AND VERBATIM REPORT

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



No. 2 — April 10, 2003

**BOARD OF INTERNAL ECONOMY
2003**

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

Room 10 Legislative Building
Thursday, April 10, 2003

Present: Members of the Board of Internal Economy

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

Staff to the Board

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

Officials in Attendance**Office of the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan**

Gregory Putz, Deputy Clerk
Mr. Gary Ward, Director of Broadcast Services
Mr. Kerry Bond, Broadcast Services

AGENDA The proposed agenda was adopted.

MINUTES Moved by Mr. Hagel, ordered, seconded by Ms. Jones, ordered, that the Minutes of Meeting #1/03 be adopted. Agreed.

ITEM 1 Decision Item: Television Broadcasting in Room 10

Moved by Mr. Hagel, seconded by Mr. D'Autremont:

That the special funding for the television broadcast of legislative committees, as recommended by the Special Committee on Rules and Procedures in its Third Report to the Assembly (adopted by the Assembly on April 3, 2003) and detailed by a "Report Concerning Television Broadcasting in Room 10" presented to the said committee on March 27, 2003 (committee document RPC 05/24) and an update Report dated April 9th be approved as follows:

Capital Costs (equipment and installation).....	\$175,000
Ongoing operation & maintenance	
including 2 sessional technician positions	\$ 30,000

And further, that the Chair request that the Minister of Finance present these amounts to the Legislative Assembly as soon as possible during the present session as a Further Estimate to the 2003-2004 Estimates of the Legislative Assembly (Vote 21).

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

Minute # 1569

ITEM 2 Other Business

Mr. D'Autremont asked for information regarding the calculations for the MLA allowance for temporary accommodation in Regina.

Ms. Julé asked for information regarding timelines and benefits for a surviving spouse. The Speaker committed to supply more information regarding these benefits.

The meeting adjourned at 5:37 p.m.

Hon. P. Myron Kowalsky
Chair

Margaret Tulloch
Secretary

The board met at 17:11.

The Chair: — So members of the board, we will start our meeting.

To start with the opening, you have an agenda before you. On the agenda we have the minutes from the last meeting which is the meeting of Wednesday, February 26. Approval of those minutes, and then we have one decision item to deal with today, and that was with the television broadcasting in room 10.

And I hope in the future we will be able to have a meeting where we'll be able to look at our strategic plan and maybe any other items that members might bring out.

And first of all what I want to do then is, are we agreed on the agenda? Does anybody have . . . Agreed.

Then first of all, maybe I should just give you a minute or two to take a look at the minutes if you haven't had a chance to do so. There may be a question or comment or something that somebody wants to raise on them.

February 26, 2003. I need a seconder. The seconder . . . by Ms. Jones. Comments or questions? All those in favour? Any opposed? The motion is carried.

The item 1 then, the decision item with respect to television broadcasting out of room 10. You should have in your packages a copy of the meeting of item . . . called item 1, and it's called a "Report Concerning Television Broadcasting in Room 10."

This is a . . . just a copy of what you've already had previously, given to us by the people from broadcast services. Also, there's a one . . . about a half a page item, an update on that regarding . . . it's called "Update to Report Concerning Television Broadcasting in Room 10"; a copy of the motion from the Rules and Procedures Committee, the motion by Mr. Thomson; and also at the very back of that package is a proposed motion regarding the funding . . . authorization of the funding for the televising from room 10.

Since the last meeting, the people from broadcast services have had an opportunity to verify the numbers that they had given us on the estimate. The equipment has . . . the need for the equipment and the cost of the equipment has been verified once again at \$165,000.

Further discussion though to what we were doing last . . . talking about last time. Last time we had looked at the possibility of putting the equipment right in this area. When we considered things like having continued use of this building and other use of this room, and also the need for soundproofing, the people who are doing broadcast services, and as they're . . . have to be able to talk to each other and not interfere with the meeting, they looked at other options. And they found that there's a room available right across the hallway from here, in room 10, which would be quite — 9, room 9, thank you — in room 9, which would be quite suitable for this. And it would mean that they would wire it from there and run it, run the broadcasting remotely, from room 10 — very similar, in a fashion, very similar that they run the broadcasting now from

their room outside of the Assembly chambers.

To outfit that room, and to set up to do the wiring, and to bring in the air conditioning that's necessary for it, the power installations, and to reroute the cables that would be needed to do it, bring in a telephone and some furniture, to be certain that we'd be able to do it, we're estimating a cost of \$10,000 for it. So that would bring the total cost up to \$175,000. As estimated before, the staff for — sessional staff — would estimate at \$25,000. And of course when you . . . there's always the possibility of maintenance for equipment, and so we're estimating that at \$5,000.

So the request would be for \$175,000 for capital; and for the technician and maintenance, \$30,000. Open it up for discussion.

Hon. Mr. Hagel: — Mr. Chair, I guess the one key question is this. And I assume the answer is yes, but I'd just as soon not assume, I'd like to hear the answer is yes. But I assume that with this expenditure then, it would put us in the position whereby you could, by using at this point in time the legislature as a venue for committee and using room 10 as a venue for committee, then this would put us in the position where we could be, once installed, holding a committee meeting in one of those rooms that is televised live, and the other room then produces a tape which is of appropriate quality to enable for tape delay broadcast from the other committee; that that's what that gets us by passing this resolution, is the capacity to achieve that.

The Chair: — I believe that would be an accurate representation. And that's why we need the extra positions, the \$30,000, because we're going to need staff to be able to staff both control rooms at the same time. And then one would be put on tape, very similar to what's done now in a sense except, because I think cable repeats . . . we do some repetition now at different times of the day.

Hon. Mr. Hagel: — Yes. So there is no . . . The board can be assured then there would not be, for purposes of committee projections and, sorry, committee taping and then the broadcasting, there would not be any other subsequent requests or requirements in order to accommodate that?

The Chair: — I'll ask Gwenn if she wants to comment on that.

Hon. Mr. Hagel: — I assume the answer to this question is yes, but I just want to be sure.

Ms. Ronyk: — I think the answer is yes, but perhaps these guys are the ones that would be able to tell us that. But we think we've identified what's needed to provide simultaneous committee and . . . or two committees simultaneously.

Hon. Mr. Hagel: — Thanks.

The Chair: — Oh, Greg, do you have a comment on that?

Mr. Putz: — Indeed, the answer to your question is yes, until such time that the Assembly decides to create a second dedicated committee room. Then of course that room would have to be equipped as well with television cameras.

So as I was saying, Mr. Hagel, the answer to your question is yes, until such time that the Assembly decides to build a second dedicated committee room and then that would have to be outfitted with the appropriate cameras and gear to enable the broadcast to take place from that room.

Mr. Bond: — I just have one comment, Mr. Hagel. I think what we'd do is we would broadcast one on our legislative network live; the other one, the simultaneous one, we'd probably live stream it. That way we're covering both of them live; one would be via stream and the other would be via our broadcast network. And then probably reverse them on a delay basis, at least reverse the one that's been streamed. We'd put that out on the network afterward.

That way we'd have both the, both committees being put out live in some sort of an arrangement.

Mr. D'Autremont: — Thank you. Again, for Kerry or Gary, I understand how the process is going to work once this is implemented. Based on what Greg had just said about the possibility of a second committee room at some point down the road, would it be possible then to take this equipment — not the cameras but the control equipment — and use that in the room dedicated for committee work and utilize the Assembly control centre to operate the cameras here? Would . . . economical?

Mr. Ward: — It is feasible and economical. This would be a remotely run room at that point. But when you have decided to develop another committee room, you may find that it's just as cost-effective to leave a separate committee room established and have them both independent. Because if you . . . we can run it independent, we can run this committee room remotely out of our master control room, but that doesn't leave any time for any maintenance or anything up there in that room.

So I guess you sort of have to balance it you know, like well . . . Because the majority of the cost for televising in here is the robotics and the cameras, and the rest of it is, you know, the . . . basically what we have in the racks and running the other room, the switcher and that sort of thing. That amounts to less than half of the total cost. So I guess you just have to make a decision which is . . . You wear one system out sooner by using it all the time upstairs, then you don't leave any time for maintenance. You have both options there.

Mr. D'Autremont: — If we set this room up . . . let's say we're utilizing room 10 for the taping. How soon would taping — not for broadcast but for members' access to the tapes — how long would that be, how soon would that be available?

Mr. Ward: — Immediately.

Mr. D'Autremont: — Immediately?

Mr. Ward: — . . . be required for archives as well. I mean it'll be archived on DVDs (digital video disc) like we're doing now, so everything that we televise will be archived. And what we do, actually, we don't tape them. We put them on a hard drive. Like right now our playbacks, they're not off a tape machine that you see in the mornings. They're off a actual hard drive recorder. So what we do is whatever's live we go live with. The other committee would be recorded on that hard drive and then

it's scheduled in to automatically come on and play when it's over at a certain time.

Mr. D'Autremont: — Would it be possible to get the tapes rather than on the VCR (video cassette recorder) tapes that we use now, would it be possible to get that on CDs (compact disc)?

Mr. Ward: — That's how we record . . .

Mr. D'Autremont: — Oh that's how you're doing it now? Tells you how long ago since I got one.

Mr. Ward: — Actually DVDs. And I'm not sure whether the members are aware of it or not, but we have the capability of making those copies for you on DVD if you want to buy rewriteable discs instead of tapes.

Mr. D'Autremont: — Yes. I don't think . . . because I've seen members carrying around their VCR tapes still looking to get a, you know, a question or a speech that they've given recorded. So they'll be interested to know that they can get them on DVD, rewrite CDs.

Ms. Jones: — I rather think that my question might have been answered, but it had to do with the capital cost of our equipment that we're thinking of purchasing here.

If we didn't maintain a committee room here, is this equipment transferable and usable in a future committee room, say the fourth floor? Or is the intention to leave telecasting equipment down here and then develop another?

Mr. Bond: — It could be definitely left downstairs. The master control could be duplicated and the equipment put up there, leaving just the robotics down here and routed through the control room. Definitely it could be done in that way.

Hon. Mr. Osika: — I just wanted to clarify and perhaps we were told this and I should remember it, but on the distribution for interessionals it's \$500 an hour up to \$30,000 a month. Is that only if requested or is that . . . is there some type of contractual agreement where there is a minimum payment?

Mr. Ward: — On that we have a minimum payment which gives us four months; that's what we estimate the session to be, you know, the average session, to be around four months. So that's what our yearly contract is with SCN (Saskatchewan Communications Network) and after that it's \$500 an hour or 30,000 a month.

Hon. Mr. Osika: — Okay. I guess that clarifies it. Well basically it'll just . . . if you were going to replay the proceedings in four months, it'll just be another four months; is that what you're saying? It's going to cost us \$500 an hour?

Mr. Bond: — Oh no, we wouldn't.

Hon. Mr. Osika: — I just wasn't clear on that.

Mr. Ward: — We don't replay the proceedings after the session ends.

Hon. Mr. Osika: — So this intersessional would be strictly for committee meetings.

Mr. Ward: — Correct.

Mr. Putz: — If there were to be committees in the intersessional period that the committees wished to have their proceedings broadcast.

Hon. Mr. Osika: — Thank you very much.

Mr. Ward: — So if the committees are sitting when the session is on, there's no extra charge.

Mr. D'Autremont: — ... my Rules Committee hat now. When we deliberated the rules and come to the decision on this, we had envisioned two committee rooms as the ideal, one of which was room 10 and one of which was a new committee room on the fourth floor.

We recognized that there was difficulties utilizing the Assembly floor, that it's really not designed for committee use and that it was awkward in using that. And so it was always envisioned using room 10 and a fourth floor committee room as the main committee room, actually, rather than the Assembly floor. So that's just a clarification from the Rules Committee's point of view on this particular issue.

Now what was my question about to be ... (inaudible interjection) ... Yes. I'll come back to it. Oh, I know what it was.

The set-up that you're envisioning for this capital cost is what — a three camera or four camera or five camera set-up? A five camera set-up. Okay.

The Chair: — Thank you. We'll now go to Mr. Hagel.

Hon. Mr. Hagel: — Yes, just ... Mr. Chairman, I wanted to confirm — following up Mr. Osika's question — I think the broadcasting expenditures intersessionally were in fact ... those were part of our board deliberations when we were dealing with the budget. The fact that we're looking at introducing this capacity I don't think changes anything in terms of budgetary implications that we've not, haven't already considered. Am I correct?

The Chair: — Correct.

Hon. Mr. Hagel: — I'm just kind of asking sort of yes and no questions, Mr. Chair.

The Chair: — Meaning that we looked at it but we did not request any money for that portion for committees intersessionally because we weren't able to anticipate whether it was going to be required or not. It would ... if we did go to a committee, we may have to come back for more funding if we wanted it broadcast.

Hon. Mr. Hagel: — That's what we were contemplating at that time. Which has been, which has been the standard approach to date and I think will enable us over a period of time to more accurately contemplate what needs to be part of base funding

and what needs to be part of ... and what needs to be treated as board-approved traditional funding depending on the requirements of committees. Good, thanks.

The Chair: — Thank you.

Mr. D'Autremont: — I think if we look back, I don't believe that we actually provided any funding for the committees to actually sit outside of sessional at the present time, and that the review of the costs of broadcasting would certainly be, could certainly be looked at at the same time as the review to provide funding to a committee that wished to sit intersessionally.

So it would all be a package together rather than an individual item.

Hon. Mr. Hagel: — Well then, Mr. Chair, with the discussion that we've had, I'd be happy to move the motion as it's worded in our books.

The Chair: — I have a mover then, Mr. Hagel:

That the funding for the television broadcast of legislative committees as recommended by the Special Committee on Rules and Procedures in its third report to the Assembly, adopted by the Assembly on April 3, 2003, and detailed by a "Report Concerning Television Broadcasting in Room 10" presented to the said committee on March 27, 2003, committee document RPC 05/24, and an update report dated April 9, be approved as follows: capital costs (equipment and installation), 175,000; ongoing operation and maintenance including two sessional technician positions, \$30,000; and further

That the Chair request that the Minister of Finance present these amounts to the Legislative Assembly as soon as possible during the present session as a further estimate to the 2003-2004 Estimates of the Legislative Assembly, Vote 21.

Do I have a seconder? Mr. D'Autremont.

Any further discussion on the motion? Ready for the question? Is it the pleasure of this group to adopt the motion? Those in favour? Any opposed? None. Motion is carried. So I need a ... He's got a signature on that one.

That is the business that I had before me, before the committee, unless somebody has an item they want to raise and then we'll ...

Mr. D'Autremont: — Maybe. Just wait.

The Chair: — Thank you very much, Gary and Kerry and Greg.

Mr. D'Autremont: — I was wondering if the Clerks or if financing could provide us with a outline and procedures on our accommodation allowance and how the determination is made based on cost-of-living allowance, etc.; what that amount will be; and how that's all decided; and what the procedure is for making the changes on that.

The Chair: — Is the question understood, first of all? Perhaps just reword it and ...

Mr. D'Autremont: — Once ... like when we agreed to the accommodation allowance, it was set at \$700 and its application is also provided with cost-of-living allowance increases. So how is the determination made as to what that impact will have and what the allowance will be? How will it affect how it grows? And is there a maximum?

Ms. Borowski: — Right now there is an indexing clause in the directive and it says:

It shall be increased by the cost of living of the consumer price index for Saskatchewan.

So what happens every year is I get that amount from the Bureau of Statistics and I apply it. Now that amount, it affects ... actually there are a number of numbers in the travel directive. There's the 700 which has since been indexed, for the accommodation allowance. There's the formula for calculating the allowance for private members ... rural members, well private members ... okay.

So all those numbers get indexed and then we calculate the allowance at that point. We've run into a bit of something different with the accommodation right now in that that has been indexed over the last three years, three or four years now. The allowance also stated that members would claim, based on 25 ... based on the public service rate for private accommodation, which is \$25 a night. What has happened is though, as the allowance has gone up, we're now at a point where in months where there's only 28 days, the 25 times 28 days is the 700; in months that it's 30 days then it becomes 750; and then 31 becomes 775. So that amount has changed.

Now what we have done up until this point is we have ... The maximum of the allowance never exceeded the 25, so we always capped it at the maximum that the allowance was, except for February which was only 28 days. So because the directive specifies that members claim based on \$25 a night, we would for all other months, except February, the maximum could be claimed, but for February we capped it at 700.

What's happened this year now with the — it was a 2.8 per cent increase that was applied to the directive amounts, which brings it up to about 760 something or other — it's a little bit; I can't remember quite exactly what the amount is — but we are now at the position where the \$25 a night, unless you're, it's really only for months that are 31 days, then you're kind of in a little bit of a different situation.

So the way the directive is worded we've kind of got two competing things. We've got one clause that says members claim based on \$25 a night and then we've got another section for rent that says members claim up to a maximum of ... it's 769 or something like that right now, I believe.

Mr. D'Autremont: — Okay. Well thank you. This clarifies that, yes.

The Chair: — Thank you very much.

Ms. Julé: — Mr. Chair, I have a question, if I could ask. Okay. I need some clarification for some of my members regarding the ability of the spouse of a deceased member to claim health

benefits.

From what some of the discussion that went through from the pamphlet that was put forward and received by some of our caucus members that they have ... they're under the impression that this is ... health benefits for that spouse can only go up to a two-year time period, and after that there is no more provision for them to be able to tap into the health benefits. Is that correct?

The Chair: — Is that something you can supply here at this time?

Mr. D'Autremont: — Perhaps if you could just get the information and pass it on.

Ms. Ronyk: — Our plan is the same as the government plan. And that's what it is at the moment. But I can ... I'll have to, you know, it's Linda in HR (human resources) that would have that detail.

Ms. Julé: — Okay. Thank you.

The Chair: — No further questions. Thank you very much. Motion to adjourn? Mr. Hagel. All in favour? Motion's carried. Thank you very much.

The board adjourned at 17:37.

