



Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan

BOARD OF INTERNAL ECONOMY

MINUTES AND VERBATIM REPORT

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The Honourable P. Myron Kowalsky
Speaker



No. 1 — January 5, 2004

**BOARD OF INTERNAL ECONOMY
2004**

Hon. P. Myron Kowalsky, Chair
Prince Albert Carlton

Dan D'Autremont
Cannington

Glenn Hagel
Moose Jaw North

Hon. Deb Higgins
Moose Jaw Wakamow

Don McMorris
Indian Head-Milestone

Hon. Andrew Thomson
Regina South

Kevin Yates
Regina Dewdney

BOARD OF INTERNAL ECONOMY

1:00 p.m. January 5, 2004

Present:

Members of the Board of Internal Economy

Mr. Dan D'Autremont
Mr. Glenn Hagel
Hon. Deb. Higgins
Mr. Don McMorris
Hon. Andrew Thomson
Mr. Kevin Yates

Staff to the Board

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

AGENDA

Moved by Mr. D'Autremont, seconded by Mr. Hagel that the proposed agenda be adopted. Agreed.

MINUTES

Moved by Mr. Hagel, ordered, seconded by Mr. D'Autremont, ordered, that the Minutes of Meeting #2/03 and Meeting #3/03 be adopted. Agreed.

ITEM 1

Table Item:

Legislative Assembly Year-End and Quarterly Financial Forecast Reports

The Chair tabled the fourth quarter report for the year ended March 31, 2003 and the first and second quarter financial forecast reports for the 2003-2004 fiscal year.

ITEM 2

Decision Item: Special Warrant Request

Moved by Mr. Hagel, seconded by Mr. Yates:

That a Special Warrant in the amount of \$224,000 be approved for the Legislative Assembly for the 2003-2004 fiscal year.

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

Minute #1571

The meeting adjourned at 1:34 p.m.

The board met at 13:00.

The Chair: — Good afternoon, everyone. Thank you very much for your attendance at this meeting, this meeting being a meeting that was called specially to deal with a special warrant request.

You have all been given a copy of an agenda. It's titled Board of Internal Economy. I'd ask you to make some typing adjustments here. Adjust your computers so that the date reads January 5, 2004 not — on the agenda — not April 10, and the location is 255 not room 10.

And the proposed agenda is first of all approval of a proposed agenda, minutes, approval of minutes from the meeting two of '03 and meeting three of '03, followed by tabling of quarterly reports for the information of the board and then followed by the one decision item that we have before us.

So I would first of all provide you with just a little time for taking a look at the agenda, and you may also want to just take a look at the minutes first of all before I ask for any . . . Well we'll have to have approval of the agenda first.

It's nice to see everybody back for our first meeting in 2004. I anticipate the meeting will not take too long, but there's an inevitability that somebody may have some questions, and we are prepared to follow up and make the necessary responses.

If you are ready, then I would ask for approval of the agenda. Moved by Mr. D'Autremont, seconded by Mr. Hagel. All in favour of the adoption of the agenda? The motion is carried.

There are two sets of minutes that are in the notes, follow-ups to previous meetings, and I would give you a little bit of time to go through them. Has everybody had a chance to look at . . . seen these before?

These have gone out with the verbatims previously, but we have never formally adopted these minutes, so we should do that. I think probably one motion to adopt both would be fine. Mr. Hagel? So moved by Mr. Hagel that the minutes for meeting two and meeting three be adopted. Is there a seconder? Mr. D'Autremont seconded. Those in favour of the motion? Any opposed? The motion is carried.

I hereby formally table the reports of the Legislative Assembly budgetary expenditures, statutory expenditures for the fourth quarter of '02-03 and the first and second quarters of '03-04. And that is simply for information although if somebody has a comment or a question they might want to make on those, we'll provide time for that.

Mr. D'Autremont: — I've got one question. I guess this is, it looks like, the same numbers in the first quarter and second quarter. On the item under administration, the general administration variance of 230,000, is that actuals or is that projected expenses which is related to directive 24?

The Chair: — . . . Clerk.

Ms. Ronyk: — That would be projected at that time. So that

was before we knew there was going to be an election.

Mr. D'Autremont: — Right.

Ms. Ronyk: — That was projecting an overexpenditure. Right now our projection for this fiscal year in that code is an overexpenditure of \$90,000, so it's down substantially.

The Chair: — Any further questions? We can come back to this item and question on it at any time, so I'd like to just proceed then.

We'll proceed to item 2, the decision item, special warrant request. We did advise all committee members of this request by sending everybody a paper with the date along . . . the paper along with the time and date of meeting. And what you have here before you is a special Assembly . . . pardon me, a Legislative Assembly special warrant request for 224,000 and the detailing of it is on the page.

The good news is that we were able to offset some of the costs items on this on the committee rooms, to help pay for the refurbishing of the committee rooms and the equipment in the committee rooms because of some savings in certain places as a result of, for example, the committee — towards the bottom of that page — the committees did not use up as much as was budgeted. Neither did *Hansard*, and vacancies in the Clerk's office plus several other smaller savings grouped together, so for a total of 146,000 in savings to offset some of the costs.

Now the reason we're under budget in some of these places was, first of all, \$90,000 were underbudgeted for directive 24. As you're aware, we do not budget for an election year unless we know definitely that there is going to be an election. And so we're finding that as a result of the election a lot of the members are refurbishing their equipment, updating their computers and telephones — not telephones, pardon me; that's in a different expense — computers, and so the projection is about 90,000 there. And this supply is not only to new members, but some members who have had equipment for some time are also updating it, as supplied by the rules.

The committee room broadcasting project needs an additional 211,000, and in order for us to provide 24-hour turnaround under the new committee system, we'll require some additional space, some furniture, some computer hardware and software, to the total of 69,000.

Now we had projected something very close to that. We had projected originally 175,000 for capital costs and two sessional . . . operational and maintenance costs, about 30,000, so 105,000 but — pardon me, 205,000 — but it's coming in at two eleven at this stage. And a lot of that is due to some additional materials that were purchased. For example, 20 chairs at about \$450 apiece, which was not budgeted . . . or put into the budget last time. We also had to get some extra wiring in there so that if we were having, for example, a PowerPoint presentation that we would have the capability of putting that PowerPoint directly onto the television output rather than having the camera having to . . . the television cameras having to focus in on it. So that would give us top quality feed to go out via cable.

And of course then the other thing we wanted to put in there was some monitors so that people could — who might be in the gallery — could view things. Any other details we can ask for. Maybe Greg might be able to help us out on that.

But that's sort of a general summary of the request. Any comments or questions?

Mr. Hagel: — What's the status of the work that was done to provide for the tables?

The Chair: — SPMC (Saskatchewan Property Management Corporation) undertook to provide us with tables. When we looked at the tables, we think that there's some adjustment needed to them, and I've put in a request that we have that ledge lowered, and that is in the works right now. It has not been completed yet, but . . . well we're simply asking that it be done before session opens.

Mr. Hagel: — Are there additional costs involved in that or is this . . . (inaudible) . . . cost of making tables that are actually useful?

The Chair: — There will be additional costs. Now whether that's going to be borne by SPMC or the Legislative Assembly budget is yet to be determined. I anticipate that SPMC will absorb a lot of the cost, but I don't have that in any way definite. It could involve a cost to the Legislative Assembly. Our budget should be able to handle it, any additional amount that we might need.

Mr. D'Autremont: — This 211,000 for the committee rooms, this wasn't previously budgeted. This was brought in as a supplementary, and now that's why it needs the special warrant; is that not right?

The Chair: — That's correct. It was authorized, but we didn't . . . we were then, we had a figure estimated with which to go for into the budget. You may recall . . . I think you asked the question yourself about whether that money was being made available. And we thought we might have some savings; we didn't know the exact amount. And so we simply waited till we had an accurate amount, and now we've got a definite amount, and we're putting it into the special warrant.

Mr. D'Autremont: — That was basically my question. It wasn't approved in the budgetary process last year. It was . . .

The Chair: — No.

Mr. D'Autremont: — Then the decision was made during the year, and now we're applying for special warrants for it.

The Chair: — That's correct.

Mr. Hagel: — Just to reconfirm your . . . to make it crystal clear, there's no circumstance that would involve having another request for funding in order to make those tables actually useful.

Ms. Ronyk: — Well we can't be absolutely certain about that, Mr. Hagel, but we're waiting to hear back from Steve on whether . . . They know for sure those tables have to be fixed,

and we're waiting to hear back on what the cost will be. At one point they were talking about throwing them out and starting over, but I doubt that will be the alternative that we end up with. They should be able to deal with those tables, and so we wouldn't have to pay for the materials again. It would be merely the labour to fix them.

And SPMC paid for all of those tables. They have absorbed that cost, as well as the renovations to the room. And we're just sort of worrying that, you know, because we're requiring them to fix the tables they may ask us to pay for some of the cost. But I don't think it will be large, and I'm sure, as Mr. Speaker says, we'll be able to cope with that without it affecting a need for any further funding.

Mr. Hagel: — So in the 211,000 that's here, there is no dollar figure that's assigned, that's related to the production of those tables then.

Ms. Ronyk: — That's correct; there is not.

Hon. Mr. Thomson: — So just to be clear then, this 211,000 deals entirely with broadcast equipment.

Ms. Ronyk: — No . . .

The Chair: — And the chairs.

Ms. Ronyk: — . . . It's the broadcast equipment. It's the systems, computer things we need, about \$2,000 worth we need to run the broadcasting system from the committee room. And it's chairs — \$9,600 for chairs — the screen, projector, and another two more storage cupboards in that room. SPMC built what's in there now, and we wanted two additional ones because what we're replacing . . . they were smaller space than what we had to replace, those big cupboards on the wall. And we do need the additional space. So there's about \$3,600 in more cupboards that's in addition to the actual broadcasting equipment.

Hon. Mr. Thomson: — I guess there is some solace in remembering that this is the low-cost option as compared to the fourth-floor renovations that were looked at because I know when, certainly when we were undertaking democratic reform and the committee reform, there was never any thought that we would spend 450 bucks on a chair, let alone buy a dozen of them.

So I mean this is . . . (inaudible) . . . is one of those things that I think concerns us a little bit as we start getting further into this. There was more of a sense of, yes, fine, we're going to put in the audiovisual equipment; yes, we would make the rooms more accessible. I wasn't aware that we were looking at anything this significant. But fair enough, if this is the cost, then I guess we should find some solace in the fact that we didn't undertake the renovations to the fourth floor at a cost of \$1 million.

Ms. Ronyk: — I might just comment on the chairs, that the chairs that were in the committee room before, in room 10, are now being used as the audience or the witness chairs. I mean they're all along the back, so they're being used. We had to replace or have sufficient chairs for around the table. And these

ones are adjustable, so they will work better for the varying sizes of people that we have.

Mr. Hagel: — Raise them up so you can see . . .

Ms. Ronyk: — Yes, so you can see over the lip.

Mr. D'Autremont: — The monitors that are being purchased and placed, are those going into room 10, or are those on the Assembly galleries?

Ms. Ronyk: — Those are in room 10. The need for the monitors for the spectators is that whenever there is a PowerPoint presentation made, they wouldn't be able to see it. And they will now.

Also by having the monitors, we can capture a PowerPoint presentation, and the computer will broadcast it, rather than having to view it through a camera which wouldn't be very good.

Mr. D'Autremont: — Okay. Thank you.

The Chair: — Any further comments or questions? The motion would be that the special warrant request of 224,000 be approved. Moved by Mr. Hagel, seconded by Mr. Yates. All in favour of the motion? Any opposed? The motion is carried unanimously.

That kind of brings us to an end of the agenda items. Notice of the next meeting is going to be, is for, set tentatively for February 25. We're looking at a 9 a.m. start because that's the meeting that takes a long time to get through various budget items.

Motion to adjourn?

Hon. Mr. Thomson: — Sorry, I've just got a . . . This is a tentative date?

The Chair: — We have agreement on the date. I mean it's . . . I say tentative because I've had so many of these postponed.

Hon. Mr. Thomson: — I just think we may need to look at this as tentative. I think that last week of February, that week of the 25th, is going to have a conflict for government members.

The Chair: — That's why we're trying to set it quite far ahead so that we have had a date, because I recognize that as a problem. But that's why I've used the word tentative, just in the event that some . . . We tried to set the meeting date as close as we could to last . . . our experience over the last couple of years.

Hon. Mr. Thomson: — I think there's going to be a conflict there.

The Chair: — You think there will be? Well let's just leave it as the 25th. If we confirm the conflict, we'll have to look for another date, and members will be notified. Thank you very much.

Ms. Ronyk: — At that point we're getting close to the time when the government needs our numbers.

The Chair: — So we get the squeeze from both ends here.

Motion to adjourn. Mr. Thomson. All in favour? The meeting is adjourned.

The board adjourned at 13:34.

