



**Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan**

**BOARD OF INTERNAL ECONOMY**

**HANSARD VERBATIM REPORT**

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No. 2 — February 9, 2015

## **BOARD OF INTERNAL ECONOMY**

Hon. Dan D'Autremont, Chair  
Cannington

Hon. Ken Cheveldayoff  
Saskatoon Silver Springs

Ms. Doreen Eagles  
Estevan

Mr. David Forbes  
Saskatoon Centre

Hon. Jeremy Harrison  
Meadow Lake

Hon. Nancy Heppner  
Martensville

Mr. Warren McCall  
Regina Elphinstone-Centre

[The board met at 13:00.]

**The Chair:** — Okay, the time being 1 p.m., I call this meeting of the Board of Internal Economy to order. Present today we have the Hon. Jeremy Harrison. We have the Hon. Ken Cheveldayoff and the Hon. Nancy Heppner and MLA [Member of the Legislative Assembly] Warren McCall.

Before you, you see the packages prepared for today's meeting, meeting no. 2/15. First item on the agenda is the approval of the proposed agenda. Would someone move that?

**Hon. Mr. Harrison:** — I so move.

**The Chair:** — Mr. Harrison. Secunder? Mr. McCall. All in favour?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Chair:** — Carried. Okay. We have the minutes of the last meeting. We need approval of the minutes of the meeting of 1/15. They are in your package. Are there any questions related to those minutes? If not, would someone move approval of those minutes?

**Mr. McCall:** — I so move.

**The Chair:** — Mr. McCall. Secunder? Mr. Cheveldayoff. All in favour?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Chair:** — Carried. Okay. Item no. 1, revisions of remuneration for members of the Legislative Assembly. There are multiple directives on this. These items have been requested by the lead of the government on the Board of Internal Economy, and I will defer to him. Mr. Harrison.

**Hon. Mr. Harrison:** — Great. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As members know, the rate of remuneration for MLAs is currently tied to the consumer price index increase or decrease for any given year. The government is proposing that, given the current fiscal situation, that the rate of remuneration for MLAs be held constant with the levels from the previous year and in accordance with what is being asked of other senior managers in government. So we would move that the directive #21 be amended with a clause (9) reading that:

Notwithstanding section (8), for fiscal year 2015-2016 the annual change in the consumer price index for Saskatchewan is deemed to be zero and the rates for annual indemnity and allowances as captured within this directive shall remain consistent with 2014-2015 rates.

I so move.

**The Chair:** — Secunder? Ms. Heppner. Any discussion? All in favour?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Chair:** — Carried. Okay, I recognize Mr. Harrison.

**Hon. Mr. Harrison:** — Yes, thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would further move in the same spirit as with the previous motion that directive 17.2, committee indemnity and expenses, is amended by adding a new section (9) as follows:

Notwithstanding section (8), for fiscal year 2015-2016 the annual change in the consumer price index for Saskatchewan is deemed to be zero and the rates for per diem indemnity as captured within this directive shall remain consistent with 2014-2015 rates.

And, that this amendment shall take effect on April 1st, 2015.

I so move.

**The Chair:** — Secunder, please. Ms. Heppner. All in favour? Any discussion first? All in favour?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Chair:** — Carried. I recognize Mr. Harrison.

**Hon. Mr. Harrison:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I further move that directive #19, Board of Internal Economy indemnity and expenses, is amended by renumbering sections (6) and (7), and by renumbering section (5.1) as section (6), and by adding a new section (8) as follows:

Notwithstanding section (7), for fiscal year 2015-2016 the annual change in the consumer price index for Saskatchewan is deemed to be zero and the rates for per diem indemnity as captured within this directive shall remain consistent with 2014-2015 rates.

And, that this amendment shall take effect on April 1st, 2015.

**The Chair:** — Can I have a secunder, please? Ms. Heppner. Any discussion? All in favour?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Chair:** — Carried. Okay, item no. 2, constituency assistant salary, directive #6. I'm proposing that we bring forward a change to directive 6.2 that would read:

On average in a fiscal year, in no instance shall a constituency assistant's remuneration exceed \$2,884.62 bi-weekly (\$75,000 per annum) inclusive of bonus payments over the course of the fiscal year.

Salaries within the CAs [constituency assistant] have been increasing in some cases, and the purpose of this was to put obviously a top line on payments to all CAs in aggregate because we're shifting money from the other accounts that are designed for services to constituents or travel to provide for these provisions. And it was felt that there needs to be an upper limit on what is being spent out of there, that the money is allocated to those other accounts for specific purposes and should remain there. Would someone move?

**Hon. Mr. Harrison:** — So moved.

**The Chair:** — Moved by Mr. Harrison. Secunder? . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . Well we need a secunder, and then we have the discussion. Is there a secunder for this motion?

**Mr. McCall:** — I'll second it.

**The Chair:** — Thank you, Mr. McCall. Discussion. Ms. Heppner.

**Hon. Ms. Heppner:** — While I am not at all against the intent behind this, I do have some concerns. There are one or two of us sitting MLAs who have incredibly long-serving constituency assistants. Mine is one of them; Whitney is on year 21. And I think most of us are aware that I pay him well for that, but he's earned it, having done this job for 21 years.

My concern is, is there any potential to put some kind of indexing on this after this year? Because I know the fiscal restraints of this year; it's not like I'm planning on paying him 75,000. I don't think that's going to come as any great surprise to him this year. But if this is locked in at 75,000, I'm a little bit worried about it being re-examined at some point down the road. Whitney, as far as I know, isn't going anywhere, and this doesn't allow any opportunity for raises for him going into the future. He's not at 75,000 now. But just wondering about the possibility of indexation or something because if he stays around as long as I stay around, he's going to be in this job for 25, 30 years and be locked in.

**The Chair:** — I wonder if the Clerk could give us some assistance. Would this clause be subject to cost of living allowance in a regular year?

**Mr. Putz:** — What I'd have to say to that, Mr. Speaker, is that this is put in as a member initiative, and if the members so desire to have a cost of living index inserted into the directive, then of course that is entirely permissible, and it would be up to the board to make that decision.

As Ms. Heppner said, we understand this exercise this year is . . . given the announcement of some fiscal restraints in the next fiscal year. And I'm sure the board may want to revisit this and possibly some of its other decisions as we go forward.

**The Chair:** — Thank you. Any other further discussion? If not, I will call the question. All those in favour?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Chair:** — Carried. Okay. Item no. 3, Mr. Harrison.

**Hon. Mr. Harrison:** — Right. Yes, thank you, Mr. Speaker. In terms of the revision of remuneration for constituency assistants, which is in directive 6(10), the current revision of remuneration is not necessary to change because the levels are tied to executive government employees. So going forward, it will be dealt with in that fashion.

**The Chair:** — I believe we have a motion as well dealing with a new subsection in 6, no. (10).

[13:15]

**Hon. Mr. Harrison:** — Yes. And if I could move with respect to that item:

That a new section, subsection (10) be added to directive #6:

Notwithstanding section 8, for fiscal year 2015-2016 the option to provide a lump sum bonus payment to a constituency assistant is suspended.

**The Chair:** — That was moved by Mr. Harrison. Secunder? Ms. Heppner. Any discussion? All in favour?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Chair:** — Carried. Okay. Item no. 4, decision item, MLA travel outside of Canada and continental US [United States], directive 3.1, proposing:

That for outside of Canada and the continental US, that any travel utilizing the MLA's travel allowance, that the member submit a written request to the Speaker's office for approval for such travel.

Currently the rules state that a member who is attending a conference or program where there is a registration fee has to apply to the Speaker's office. This would change that slightly for the travel costs themselves outside of Canada and the continental US. Mr. Harrison.

**Hon. Mr. Harrison:** — Yes, thank you, Mr. Speaker. I see this as closing a loophole, if you wish to call it that, such that a member would be required to obtain previous permission from the Speaker.

The one question, in terms of clarification of the wording from the Speaker for travel outside of Canada and the continental United States, if the intention is that pre-approval be granted by the Speaker for travel outside of Canada, then the words "and the continental United States" would be redundant. Or is the intention that you can travel through the continental United States without . . .

**The Chair:** — The intention is that you could travel to the continental US because members do attend MLC [Midwestern Legislative Conference] and PNWER [Pacific NorthWest Economic Region] outside of Canada on a regular basis. So that would allow that, but it would exclude travel to Hawaii, Puerto Rico, Guam, you know, which are territorial US but not continental.

**Hon. Mr. Harrison:** — Okay. With that explanation then, the wording is appropriate.

**The Chair:** — Will someone move that motion please?

**Mr. McCall:** — Just one further question, Mr. Speaker.

**The Chair:** — Okay. Go ahead.

**Mr. McCall:** — In terms of when this comes into effect, I'm presuming . . . When would that be so? At the close of this meeting?

**The Chair:** — Yes, it would come into effect today.

**Mr. McCall:** — Okay. Just like to make sure.

**The Chair:** — Yes. Mover? Mr. Harrison. Second? Mr. Cheveldayoff. Any further discussion? All in favour?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Chair:** — Carried. Item no. 5, decision item, revision of caucus resources . . . [inaudible] . . . directive 7.2 and directive 11. Mr. Harrison.

**Hon. Mr. Harrison:** — Yes. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. With respect to directive #7.2, caucus resources, I would move that a section (9) be added to read as follows:

Notwithstanding section (8), for the fiscal year 2015-2016 the annual change in the consumer price index for Saskatchewan is deemed to be zero and the rates for caucus funding as captured within this directive shall remain constant with 2014-2015 rates.

**The Chair:** — A seconder to that motion please? Ms. Heppner. Any discussion? If not, all in favour?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Chair:** — Carried. Mr. Harrison.

**Hon. Mr. Harrison:** — And in line with the amendment to that directive I would move that directive #11 be amended to read with (3):

Notwithstanding section (2), for the fiscal year 2015-2016 the annual change in the consumer price index for Saskatchewan is deemed to be zero and the rates for grant funding as captured within this directive shall remain consistent with 2014-2015 rates.

**The Chair:** — Second, please. Mr. Cheveldayoff. Any discussion?

**Mr. McCall:** — Yes.

**The Chair:** — Mr. McCall.

**Mr. McCall:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. And again, it's always interesting parsing the comments of the Premier through the media as regards what the intentions are of the government concerning freezes and on. Are we to expect then a flatline on the Executive Council expenditures in the year to come?

**The Chair:** — I recognize Mr. Harrison.

**Hon. Mr. Harrison:** — I thank the Opposition House Leader for that, and I will commit to a decrease in the budget of Executive Council for this year.

**The Chair:** — Mr. McCall.

**Mr. McCall:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, and I

thank my colleague for that clarification. It's also interesting to note various of the positions that shuffled merely the day before the freeze was announced. It will be interesting to see what sort of impact that has on the spending of government overall. But I appreciate the affirmation from my colleague opposite.

**The Chair:** — Since we had some discussion, I will read the motion:

That directive 11, grant to the office of the Leader of the Opposition, is amended by adding a new section (3) as follows:

(3) Notwithstanding section (2), for fiscal year 2015-2016 the annual change in the consumer price index for Saskatchewan is deemed to be zero and the rates for grant funding as captured within this directive shall remain consistent with the 2014-15 rates.

And, that this amendment shall take effect on April 1, 2015.

All in favour?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Chair:** — Carried. Item no. 6, decision items, reconsideration of budgets of the Legislative Assembly and the officers of the Legislative Assembly. The first one up is no. 1, Advocate for Children and Youth, minute no. 1973. Mr. Harrison.

**Hon. Mr. Harrison:** — Yes, Mr. Speaker. Just by way of explanation on the budgets of the officers of the Legislative Assembly, what the intention of the motions is, for clarification, is that, as with the rest of executive government and senior managers in other areas of government, that the decreases or the reconsideration of the budgets which had been approved by the board a short while ago, the decreases would be commensurate with the status quo salary for out-of-scope employees of the independent officers. So that's what the reconsideration is with respect to.

**The Chair:** — Okay, thank you. The first item, I'll read the motion as proposed:

That minute no. 1973, adopted on January 22nd, 2015, is rescinded and the following adopted in its place:

That the 2015-16 expenditure estimates for vote 076, Office of the Advocate for Children and Youth be approved in the amount of \$2,554,000 as follows: budgetary to be voted, 2,328,000; statutory, 226,000; and further, that such estimates be forwarded to the Minister of Finance by the Chair.

Would someone move that motion, please? Mr. Harrison. Second? Ms. Heppner. Any discussion? All in favour? Okay. Go ahead, Mr. McCall.

**Mr. McCall:** — I guess just to get this one in off the top in this section of the proceedings, Mr. Speaker, and with the indulgence of my colleagues, it's about two and a half weeks

ago that we were here finalizing the budgets for the year to come for the independent officers. So I guess I'd be interested in getting some comment on what had changed between now and then, from members opposite, and I guess to get further guidance on whether or not we can expect to be back here in another two and a half weeks. What's the guess from members opposite?

**The Chair:** — I recognize Mr. Harrison.

**Hon. Mr. Harrison:** — Well I thank the member for the comment and can undertake that we will not be back here again in two and a half weeks, that this will be the conclusion of the budget process for the legislative officers.

I think that there is a general feeling on the part of government that if we are to ask our managers and MLAs and ministers and others to have a status quo budget this year — which is a decision that had been announced recently; as the member knows, only a few days ago — that it would be appropriate that we have others who are perhaps employed by independent officers but nonetheless are paid through taxpayer funds exclusively, to take a commensurate and equal sort of . . . We obviously can't direct that the independent officers pay each employee a particular amount, but what we're asking is that the figures that would be involved if they were to be in that same exact government position would be reflected in the budget. So that's where we're at.

**The Chair:** — After receiving contact from the government lead on the Board of Internal Economy, I did contact all of the officers to indicate that this was a possibility, that the board may reconsider this. And the responses back from the officers was commensurate with their actions here previously, was that they understood restraint was in order. And the comments back was that they were prepared to accept these changes.

Any other comments? I believe we had a motion on the table, if you want me to read it again. Or will you take it as read?

**An Hon. Member:** — Take it as read.

**The Chair:** — All those in favour?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Chair:** — Carried. Mr. Harrison.

**Hon. Mr. Harrison:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would move with respect to the Office of the Ombudsman:

That minute no. 1974, adopted on January 22, 2015, is rescinded and the following adopted in its place:

That the 2015-16 expenditure estimates for vote 056, Ombudsman be approved in the amount of 3,429,000 as follows: budgetary to be voted, \$3,203,000 statutory, \$226,000; and further, that such estimates be forwarded to the Minister of Finance by the Chair.

I so move.

**The Chair:** — Secunder? Mr. Cheveldayoff. Any discussion?

All those in favour?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Chair:** — Carried. Item no. 6-3, Office of the Information and Privacy Commissioner, minute 1976. Mr. Harrison.

**Hon. Mr. Harrison:** — Yes, thank you, Mr. Speaker. With respect to the Office of the Information and Privacy Commissioner, I move:

That minute no. 1976, adopted on January 22nd, 2015, is rescinded and the following adopted in its place:

That the 2015-16 expenditure estimates for vote 055, Information and Privacy Commissioner be approved in the amount of \$1,469,000 as follows: budgetary to be voted, \$1,469,000; and further, that such estimates be forwarded to the Minister of Finance by the Chair.

I so move.

**The Chair:** — Secunder, please? Mr. Cheveldayoff. Any discussion? All in favour?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Chair:** — Carried. Item 6-4, Office of the Conflict of Interest Commissioner, minute 1977. Mr. Harrison.

**Hon. Mr. Harrison:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. With respect to the Office of the Conflict of Interest Commissioner, I move:

That minute no. 1977, adopted on January 22nd, 2015, is rescinded and the following adopted in its place:

That the 2015-16 expenditure estimates for vote 057, Conflict of Interest Commissioner be approved in the amount of \$171,000 as follows: budgetary, to be voted, \$171,000; and further, that such estimates be forwarded to the Minister of Finance by the Chair.

I so move.

[13:30]

**The Chair:** — Secunder to that motion? Ms. Heppner. Any discussion? All in favour?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Chair:** — Carried. Item no. 6-5, Office of the Lobbyist Registrar, minute 1978. Mr. Harrison.

**Hon. Mr. Harrison:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. With respect to the Office of the Lobbyist Registrar, I move:

That minute no. 1978, adopted on January 22nd, 2015, is rescinded and the following adopted in its place:

That the 2015-16 expenditure estimates for vote 057, Office of the Lobbyist Registrar and establishment of the Lobbyist Registrar be approved in the amount of \$418,000

as follows: budgetary, to be voted, \$418,000; and further, that such estimates be forwarded to the Minister of Finance by the Chair.

I so move.

**The Chair:** — Secunder? Ms. Heppner. Any discussion? All those in favour?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Chair:** — Carried. Item no. 6-6, Office of the Chief Electoral Officer, minute 1980.

**Hon. Mr. Harrison:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. With respect to the Office of the Chief Electoral Officer, I move:

That minute no. 1980, adopted on January 22nd, 2015, is rescinded and the following adopted in its place:

The 2015 expenditure estimates for vote 034, Chief Electoral Officer be approved in the amount of \$16,509,000 as follows: statutory, \$16,509,000, and further, that such estimates be forwarded to the Minister of Finance by the Chair.

**The Chair:** — Can I have a seconder to that motion please? Ms. Heppner. Any discussion? All in favour?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Chair:** — Carried. Item no. 6-7, Legislative Assembly minutes . . . I think that should just be minute 1982. Is that not the case? Yes. Mr. Harrison.

**Hon. Mr. Harrison:** — Yes, thank you, Mr. Speaker. With respect to the Legislative Assembly, I move:

That minute no. 1982, adopted on January 22nd, 2015, is rescinded and the following adopted in its place:

That the 2015-16 expenditure estimates for vote 021, Legislative Assembly be approved in the amount of \$26,637,000 as follows: budgetary to be voted, \$9,639,000; statutory, \$16,998,000; and further, that such estimates be forwarded to the Minister of Finance by the Chair.

So moved.

**The Chair:** — May I have a seconder to that motion? Ms. Heppner. Any discussion? All in favour?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Chair:** — Carried. That is all of the items on our agenda today. I would like to thank the staff for their diligence and hard work over the weekend in preparing all of these directives and changes and redoing the calculations. So thank you very much, and also to my staff as well that spent additional hours preparing this work for us. Mr. Harrison.

**Hon. Mr. Harrison:** — Yes, thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd firstly like to thank you for your efforts in regard to today's meeting,

putting this together. I want to thank the official opposition for making themselves available for this meeting. The Speaker's staff, the LAS [Legislative Assembly Service] staff, thank you for your work over the weekend on this, and also to the legislative officers for their work and understanding in moving forward with this.

**The Chair:** — Okay. One last motion: would someone move that we adjourn? Ms. Heppner. All in favour?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Chair:** — Carried. This meeting stands adjourned at 1:32 p.m.

[The board adjourned at 13:32.]