



Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan

BOARD OF INTERNAL ECONOMY

MINUTES AND VERBATIM REPORT



No. 2 — July 7, 1998

BOARD OF INTERNAL ECONOMY

Hon. Glenn Hagel, Chair
Moose Jaw North

Bill Boyd
Kindersley

Hon. Joanne Crofford
Regina Centre

Myron Kowalsky
Prince Albert Carlton

Hon. Eldon Lautermilch
Prince Albert Northcote

Harvey McLane
Arm River

Grant Whitmore
Saskatoon Northwest

BOARD OF INTERNAL ECONOMY

Room 10 Legislative Building

11:46 a.m. Tuesday, July 7, 1998

Present: Members of the Board of Internal Economy

Hon. Glenn Hagel, Chair
Mr. Bill Boyd
Mr. Myron Kowalsky
Hon. Eldon Lautermilch
Mr. Harvey McLane

Staff to the Board

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

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

Kerry Bond, Broadcast Services Technician
Marian Powell, Legislative Librarian
Ihor Sywanyk, Broadcast Services Technician
Gary Ward, Director of Broadcast Services

- AGENDA** Moved by Mr. Lautermilch, seconded by Mr. Boyd, that the proposed agenda be adopted. Agreed.
- MINUTES** Moved by Mr. Boyd, seconded by Mr. Lautermilch, ordered, that the Minutes of Meeting #1/98 be adopted. Agreed.
- ITEM 1** **Table Item – Provincial Auditor’s Memorandum of suggested processes for the Board of Internal Economy, May 1998**
- The Chair tabled the Provincial Auditor’s Memorandum of suggested processes for the Board of Internal Economy.
- ITEM 2** **Table Item – Provincial Auditor’s Audit Planning Memorandum for the Board of Internal Economy, March 31, 1998**
- The Chair tabled the Provincial Auditor’s Audit Planning Memorandum for the Board of Internal Economy.
- ITEM 3** **Table Item – Reply to the Request of the Board at Mtg. #1/98 of January 12th Respecting the Employee Severance Payments of the Liberal Caucus**
- The Chair tabled the schedule of wages and severance paid by the Liberal Party for the period April 1, 1997 to August 31, 1997.
- ITEM 4** **Table Item – Reply to the Request of the Board at Mtg. #1/98 of January 12th Respecting the Employee Severance Payments of the New Democratic Caucus**
- The Chair tabled the schedule of wages and severance paid by the New Democratic Party for the period April 1, 1997 to August 31, 1997.

ITEM 5

Decision Item – Caucus Research Grant

Moved by Mr. Kowalsky, seconded by Mr. Boyd:

That, in accordance with s.50(3)(o) and s.50(4) of *The Legislative Assembly and Executive Council Act* and *Directive #19 – Caucus Grant – Research Services*, the grant be increased for the 1998-99 fiscal year for the purpose of providing one-time funding to each caucus for additional research services in the following amounts:

\$13,500	– Government Caucus
\$ 9,000	– Opposition Caucus
\$ 7,500	– Third Party Caucus

such amounts to be paid to each caucus before July 31, 1998.

The question being put, it was agreed to.

Minute #1456

ITEM 6

Decision Item – Special Warrant Requests

(a) Broadcast Services

(b) Legislative Library

Moved by Mr. Lautermilch, seconded by Mr. Boyd:

That a Special Warrant request for Legislation Vote 021 for the 1998-99 fiscal year, in the amount of \$423,000.00 be approved.

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

Minute #1457

The Speaker gave notice of the following items for the next meeting of the Board of Internal Economy:

(a) Approval of appointment of Chief Electoral Officer.

(b) Discussion of Provincial Auditor's Memorandum of suggested practices.

The meeting adjourned at 12:22 p.m.

The Chair: — First of all, before proceeding to our agenda, you will be aware of course that the secretary to the Board of Internal Economy is the person who is the assistant to the Speaker, and I know that everyone knows Margaret Kleisinger who is my new assistant. And for the record I want to introduce her to you as the secretary to the Board of Internal Economy.

Let us now proceed to the agenda that you have before you. You see four tabling items and two decision items. First of all, I would like to ask for a motion to approve the agenda as proposed and provided to you earlier. This is your agenda page. If someone would like to move adoption of the agenda. Mr. Lautermilch. We don't need a seconder I don't believe. No. Discussion? Those in favour? Opposed? And that's carried.

A Member: — Actually we do need a seconder . . . (inaudible) . . . board.

The Chair: — For board? Okay. I'm advised . . . Yes, I'm sorry. Committees don't need seconders but for the board we do. Can I have a seconder for that motion to adopt? Mr. Boyd. Okay. And let us vote again then. Those in favour? Opposed? And that's carried.

We'll now proceed to the minutes of the 19 . . . excuse me, of the meeting #1/1998. Excuse me, that should be . . . Sorry, there's a typo here. That should be meeting #2/1997, is it not?

A Member: — No, the January . . .

The Chair: — Oh, yes. Sorry. That's right. It was in this fiscal . . . in this calendar year. Sorry.

Okay. Meeting #1/1998. That was an extensive meeting that was quite lengthy. The copy that you received was signed by the secretary of the board and I have since read it as well and signed the formal copy and believe it to be accurate. And it would be in order to have a motion to adopt the minutes of meeting #1/98. Mr. Boyd. Is there a seconder? Mr. Lautermilch. Discussion? Those in favour? Opposed? And that's carried.

If I can just draw your attention for the record — and you need not necessarily do this right now if you don't wish to — on page no. 21 of the minutes provided to you, the formal and accurate minutes, on the very bottom line on item no. 5, budget, it reads:

The Legislative Assembly Office shall budget and pay for the cost of acquiring the equipment and furniture authorized by the directive.

The words "equipment and furniture authorized by the directive" for some reason were absent when the verbatim copy of the meeting was distributed, and I just bring that to your attention for the accuracy of the record of the verbatim copy. But the minutes you've adopted are in fact exactly correct.

If I can now move . . . Good morning, Mr. McLane.

Mr. McLane: — Good morning.

The Chair: — Good to have you. We've just adopted the

agenda and the minutes of the January 12 meeting and we're now moving to our first item.

We've got four tabling items, and if I can refer you then to item no. 1. Item no. 1 is the Provincial Auditor's memorandum of suggested processes for the Board of Internal Economy provided on May 12, 1998 and previously forwarded to you, which is now formally tabled for the board.

And in this item the auditor responds to the request of the board to provide his advice regarding suggested processes for the Board of Internal Economy to review the budget of the Provincial Auditor. And that's provided for you as an information item but not for a discussion or decision item.

Then moving to item no. 2, tabled item, the Provincial Auditor's audit planning memorandum. And in this the Provincial Auditor provides his advice to the board as to how he will intend to proceed in his audit of the board for the period ending March 31, 1998. And that's provided to you again as an information item but not for discussion or decision.

Are we all okay with that? Yes? Okay.

And then item no. 3. Further to the information provided by the Progressive Conservative caucus, there was a motion requiring provision of a schedule of wages and severances paid by the government caucus and the Liberal caucus for the period of April 1, 1997 to August 31, 1997. So item no. 3 is the item provided by the Liberal caucus office.

And item no. 4 is that provided by the New Democratic Party caucus office. And those are again provided in response to the motion requiring that at the last meeting.

Now those are the four information items. Are there any . . . Just again, there's no decision related to any of them. Is there any comment or question related to any of those four tabled items?

If not, then we'll proceed. We've got two decision items today. One is the caucus research grant and the second is a special warrant related to Broadcast Services and the Legislative Library.

And item no. 5, and I was requested to put on the agenda the item of caucus research grant, and I turn to you. The floor is open then for a motion to be provided to the meeting by any of the members.

Mr. Kowalsky: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. What I'd like to do is move this motion, seconded by Mr. Boyd. And the motion reads:

That in accordance with section 50(3)(o) and section 50(4) of The Legislative Assembly and Executive Council Act and directive no. 9, caucus grant research services, the grant be increased for the 1998-99 fiscal year for the purpose of providing one-time funding to each caucus for additional research services in the following amounts: government caucus, 13,500; opposition caucus, 9,000; third party caucus, 7,500. Such amounts to be paid to each

caucus before July 31, 1998.

The Chair: — Okay, we have a motion before the board. Mr. Boyd seconds that? Okay. And the floor is open for discussion on that motion. Is there any discussion? If not, then those in favour, please indicate. Opposed? And that is carried.

We'll now move to item no. 6, which has two parts to it: part A, Broadcast Services and part B, Legislative Library. And we'll deal with them in that order.

You will have in your meeting materials provided then, on the cover page, the budgetary expenditure for special warrant request as proposed. These both having to do with unbudgeted expenditures proposed for approval by special warrant in the amount of \$173,000 for replacement of the computerized robotics for broadcasting of the legislative proceedings, and then secondly a \$250,000 for unbudgeted expenditures related to mobile shelving for the Legislative Library, for a total special warrant request of \$423,000.

If I can deal with them, first of all then with Broadcast Services, and introduce three people — the director of Broadcast Services, Gary Ward, and Kerry and Ihor, who are technicians of course, and you will know they are here to provide response to any questions that you may have on this item.

Perhaps if I can just walk us through the rationale for bringing this recommendation to you for special warrant, and refer you to some of the materials you were provided. Page 1 of item no. 6(a), is a memo from the director of Broadcasting Services to me dated March 5 and which I previously forwarded to you March 6, signalling to you that we've got some pending problems coming here and letting you know that I anticipated that we would be changing our time lines in having to deal with robotics prior to what we had originally thought a year ago. And that possibly this is something that could occur to create a bit of an urgent and emergency item for us, which in fact is what's happened. So that outlines that in a nutshell to you.

And then page 3 is a copy of the memo again from the director of Broadcasting Services to me dated March 8, which I provide. And this really is the meat and potatoes and summarizes very concisely the rationale for the request that is before you now. And I'll assume that you've read that before.

Then on page 5, item 6(a), is the chronology of our history of the robotic camera control system in the Legislative Assembly and then that is followed by a very detailed discussion which took place at the Communications Committee of the Legislative Assembly on June 4, 1998, and I've enclosed a *Hansard* of that meeting. And it is several pages long, which for the members of the Communications Committee answered, I think, the large majority of questions related to the robotics of our camera system and also a number of other things as well.

As the members of the Communications Committee began to try and think further into the future and this ultimately lead to the report to the Legislative Assembly with the recommendation that the Legislative Assembly at some point authorize the Communications Committee to undertake study to look at technology — the use of technology — for the purpose of our legislature which will become a board budget item some

time down the road.

Now having said all of that, if I can just summarize very briefly for you what our circumstance is here in Saskatchewan at the moment.

As you will be aware, in the last two years we have substantially expanded the receipt of the broadcast services in the province. Two years ago there were only eight communities in Saskatchewan in which you could receive the legislative broadcast during session. That was expanded to 38 communities last year and then to 68 communities this year. And so we have dramatically expanded our broadcast coverage for the . . . in fact at the same cost. And that was possible because of the willingness of SaskTel to renegotiate our distribution contract.

You will be aware as well that Saskatchewan has what I think could legitimately be called the most extensive coverage of our legislative proceedings because it's from gavel to gavel literally — so the most extensive coverage of proceedings available in the nation.

And I think, based on comments from members of the Communications Committee, something that has been well received by constituents, particularly in the areas in which the broadcasting has been new . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . I prefer to think of it as having a complete and unaltered access to the debates of the Legislative Assembly for the people of Saskatchewan to see with their own eyes and hear with their own ears and all of which I quite frankly see as an important principle, actually, in the democratic process. It's a matter of perspective, Mr. Lautermilch.

Secondly, there was great debate, as you will know, at the time back in 1982 when Saskatchewan became the first or second provincial . . . Yes, in which Saskatchewan became the second provincial jurisdiction to introduce television coverage of our proceedings. There was a great debate about the rules — about how the cameras would work and so on — and it was decided as a matter of importance and is in fact in our rules that there must be consistency and predictability about the way the cameras are used.

Now this brings us face to face with the issue that's before us now. The rules of the Assembly do require — and this is in fact what happens — that when members are speaking in the legislature, then the television camera will capture that member in a close-up, relatively close-up shot and that there is no opportunity for subjective use of cameras in our legislature.

And the rationale was very important. That members felt that regardless of which side of the House members sit on, that the camera work should be consistent and not put either side of the House, or members on other side of the House, in either exceptionally flattering or unflattering kind of perspective, and that everybody is dealt with in a predictable way that's exactly the same.

Our cameras are challenging our ability literally to do that. And, as was provided notice to you previously, our robotics have started to deteriorate. It has been for several months now that the centre camera, the one that operates out of the Speaker's gallery, has been put on lock. It can no longer zoom or move

from side to side. It has one picture and one picture only, and that's the picture of the full Assembly. The reason is because parts have been stolen from that to upgrade the robotics on other cameras so that they can be kept functional.

What began to occur in the spring session of 1998 then, is that the robotics began to break down even further and beyond our ability to pirate from the central camera in order to upgrade them . . . not upgrade then but to maintain them and keep them operating. And there were some anxious moments for our guys in broadcasting when the automatic robotics just simply were not functioning and they went to use . . . then manually directed the secondary camera.

As you will be aware, the large majority of time when members are speaking in the legislature, it is the primary camera, the one that's off the shoulders of the Speaker, that captures the member who's normally speaking in that direction. That goes in place when the Speaker recognizes a member. The light goes on within two seconds; the camera is on that member, and that's the photo that people see on television.

We've had some problems with that . . . have had to go the secondary cameras which are less direct in their picture. And also we have had some further lack of reliability that prohibits the predictable functioning of the cameras.

The broadcasting folks, as you will know from the memos, have been forecasting for the last several months now that we're relying as much on good luck as anything else for the predictable use of the cameras.

What we have before you then is a recommendation that the board approve the \$173,000 to replace the computerized robotics for the broadcasting of the legislative proceedings. This really is absolutely necessary from my point of view in order to have predictable and consistent and equivalent television coverage on both sides of the House when the House is sitting.

Without this, our broadcasting becomes really quite unpredictable. And also, just to tie this in to the discussion of the members of the Communications Committee, this expenditure in no way has the potential to become a wasted expenditure, should the board at some future date look at other uses of technology for the function of the members of the Legislative Assembly.

So I think that describes the big picture without getting into specifics. And obviously our broadcasting crew is here to answer any questions you may have.

We will just have one motion for item no. 6, which is the special warrant in total. But we'll deal with them as separate items and I'll now open the floor for questions or comments related to this portion of the special warrant recommendation to you.

Are there any questions or discussion?

Hon. Mr. Lautermilch: — Well just to say that our caucus supports this recommendation. Certainly the system has been limping along, and Mr. Ward and staff have I think done and gone above and beyond the call of the ability of technology, I

think, at some points, to keep the thing functioning.

And I'm always hesitant to be special warranting, because I would rather see it as part of a budget expenditure process. But I think in the case of the shelving that we're going to be dealing with later, and the technology that we're going to be replacing here to robotics, I would say, Mr. Speaker, that I support both initiatives.

The Chair: — Okay. Thank you.

Mr. Boyd: — Thank you. And yes, certainly our caucus also supports the initiative to improve the robotics in the Legislative Assembly here. It appears that this system has been in use for some 16 years. And given the level of technology that we all experience, I'm frankly amazed it's lasted this long.

I think a lot of the credit has to go to the people who are involved in maintaining and keeping this equipment operating for a lot longer than it probably was originally intended or thought that the lifespan of such equipment would be.

So we are supportive of the decision to upgrade the system. I hope this provides us with the absolute state of the art. I understand that that . . . I see the gentlemen nodding in approval that that does provide us with the state-of-the-art equipment.

As we all know, if you look at robotics or computerized equipment, state of the art, if it lasts . . . this installation lasts 16 years, I think we've made an extremely wise decision. Even if it doesn't last the same length of time that the last system has . . . provided good service to the people of Saskatchewan, I think it's a pretty darn good expenditure for the Assembly here to approve. So we give our unconditional approval.

The Chair: — Thanks, Mr. Boyd. Now in just a moment I'm going to ask Mr. Gary Ward to just add some additional comment. My understanding is that over the course of the past 16 years, there have been some upgrades in the cameras. This is strictly for the robotics. So it's a portion of the total system, and I think at a fraction of what was the original cost.

But perhaps, Gary, could I ask that you would comment on your view of the status of our state-of-the-art broadcasting system with this robotics change. There's really the sound system as well as the picture system that enter into that. And if you could give some comment to the Board of Internal Economy. Some of this will tie to the immediate, but also to give them heads up about issues that will emerge by way of budgetary considerations into the future.

Mr. Ward: — Yes. This system is indeed state of the art and will be for some time to come. This particular company that we're dealing with has installations all over the world and they specialize in parliamentary systems. There is only two companies that make systems. The other one specializes more in studio applications of larger robotic systems. But Applied Electronics is the prime company . . . well actually they're the Canadian distributor for Vinten. But this is the state-of-the-art system, and as I say, will be for some time.

Following this installation, what we have looked at as part of it is that if we chose to in the future, we would be able to expand

to committee television as we did in this room for the recent Crown Corporations Committee. That could be integrated into our system without any additional cost as far as control room space, and we would be able to operate everything out of that room only by adding cameras to this room, but we would have all of the controls up there. So the system that we're looking at would handle the extra cameras required to be in here for committee meetings, if we went that way.

As far as the Chamber goes, we would be looking in the . . . probably before the year 2005 we'd be looking at upgrading our audio system to a fully digital audio system. That would improve the clarity of the sound in the galleries considerably, at least give us more control over the audio.

And it would also aid considerably in the processing of the *Hansard* because they would no longer be taping the recordings as such, they'd be going to direct disk and then calling up the audio off of that, and then just, you know . . . immediate access to everything that's said in the Chamber. That's another . . . I don't have any quotes on that yet, but this is in the offing.

Also we're looking at the possibilities of incorporating computers into the Chamber. So again that's before 2005 we're hoping that we can look at that.

The Chair: — And that's unrelated to this decision, of course, but was part of what was discussed by members when they considered this in Communications Committee. The point being that nothing related to this expenditure precludes options that may be considered and to me, importantly, would not leave the board in a position where some time down the road . . . would look back and consider this to have been a wasted expenditure. We're quite confident that this is not only necessary and effective but also cost-effective.

Anything else, Mr. Boyd? Okay.

Mr. Kowalsky: — I just through you, Mr. Chair, would like to commend Gary and his staff for staying current. I notice here that they say that they're going to install the new system themselves . . .

A Member: — Yes.

Mr. Kowalsky: — . . . so that speaks well for our staff and also, I think, once they've installed it themselves they'll know every part so that if something starts to go haywire, as we call it, that they would be in a good position to have it repaired immediately.

The Chair: — This is one of the advantages, Mr. Kowalsky, of dealing with the purchase as we have because it's consistent with the entire history right from the very beginning and enables us to use our own technicians for installation and save some of the cost, but also in doing that, maximize their familiarity with it for maintenance and repair purposes into the future. So for both of those reasons, I think it's extremely desirable.

Mr. McLane: — Yes, thank you, Mr. Chair. I think the only question I have to answer today is one of whether we're going to continue broadcasting across the province what happens here

in the legislature. And on a personal note I feel that that's an important step to the people of Saskatchewan to know what their elected folks are saying on their behalf.

So the matter of keeping the system current and up to date is kind of academic in my mind and that's something that we have to approve here and certainly would commend Gary and his staff for looking after things and making us look good in the Assembly as much as he can and hopefully that these new robotics will help him do that and make us look even better. Certainly I and our caucus would support this warrant.

The Chair: — Thanks, Mr. McLane, although I think in all fairness to the broadcasting guys, it has to be pointed out that they can only send through the signal what is actually there. They can't make any member look better than they actually are although we do have a number of good-looking members, I must add.

Mr. McLane: — Thanks, Mr. Chair, for bringing us back to reality here.

The Chair: — And I would say to you as well as Speaker, Mr. McLane, it would be my objective to continue to expand our access to legislative coverage as we progress. And it has been significantly the initiative of the broadcasting crew and personally Gary Ward, who's had the discussions with the cable operators, that's enabled us to reach a whole collection of 68 signed contracts for delivery, as well as SaskTel's willingness to renegotiate our contract in order to provide us the funds to do that at no increase in cost to the Legislative Assembly.

Mr. McLane: — Probably the people at Imperial wait with bated breath for the time the signal is sent to that town.

The Chair: — Okay, it has been noted.

Mr. Ward: — I just wanted to say that at the end of this session, assuming we started February 4 and went up to March 31, the end of the fiscal year, we will have realized a saving of \$88,000 on our distribution over what it used to be when we were using the old system of distribution. Having gone to satellite, you know, we've expanded throughout the province but our savings are considerable. At least that's some benefit to us.

The Chair: — Well and that's where the money's come to purchase the hardware to make it possible for the cable stations to carry us.

A Member: — That's right.

The Chair: — Is there any other comments then related to this portion of the special warrant recommendation to you? If not, then we'll deal with it by motion together with the Legislative Library request. Thanks, Mr. Ward.

And let me then refer you to the final two pages of that special warrant request, item no. 6(b), entitled Legislative Library mobile shelving project chronology. There's page 1 and 2. And page 2 is the graphic representation of the shelving. For those of you who have not seen it over at the Walter Scott Building, I invite you to just pop over there. I know Marian Powell, our

Legislative Librarian, who's here with us today, would be happy to do that with you and it wouldn't take long.

Members of the board will be having some déjà vu on this item because — thanks fellows, I appreciate you coming by — because you did deal with this as a special warrant item in December of 1997. And I'd just like to, for the record and for your information, just run through the chronology as to why in the world are we back here doing this again.

December 12, you approved the special warrant request for \$340,000 for mobile shelving. And that for all of the reasons that were laid out at that time plus previous years about our shelving needs which became exacerbated with the alterations now being made to the building here, and the need to have to vacate some of the space we're currently occupying which just exacerbated the whole thing.

You approved it at that time, on December 15. Then SPMC (Saskatchewan Property Management Corporation) was advised by the Clerk that the special warrant had been approved. And on January 15, SPMC gave notice for the request for the proposal and its timetable. They were advertised on the 19th — meetings on January 26, February 9, the closing date on February 27.

The library was notified by SPMC of the award of the project to Johnston-Pacific conveyit. And then on March 30, unfortunately, SPMC notified the library . . . sorry the Legislative Assembly, that the mobile shelving is on order but because of the accrual accounting system, no charges could be made in that fiscal year and so here we are.

Now you'll see on the current status there some of the zones that are already in place and it's moving along. The good news is that the amount being requested is less because the tender . . . or the request for proposal came in at a lower amount than we had expected we were going to have to provide. So the request to you is not the \$340,000 that was our best estimate last year, but \$250,00.

I believe, Marian, and perhaps you'd like to take the microphone too if there's any questions, that there has been some small amount of expenditure that has taken place from that special warrant request, but it's really negligible. The large bulk of the difference here is because of the fact that when the actual contract came in it was less than we had expected.

So my recommendation to you is to approve the \$250,000 mobile shelving project special warrant amount. And let me open then the floor for questions or comments that you may have and you may also wish to direct to Marian.

Are there any questions or comments?

You ready for the question, having considered it previously?

Hon. Mr. Lautermilch: — I think so.

The Chair: — Okay. Then if there aren't any questions, I then recommend to you, it would be in order to have a motion that a special warrant request for legislation vote 021 for the 1998-99 fiscal year in the amount of \$423,000 be approved.

Would someone wish to move that? Mr. Lautermilch. Is there a seconder? Mr. Boyd. Is there discussion? If not, those in favour? Opposed? And that's carried unanimously.

That brings us then to the end of our agenda items. And you have the notice of a couple of upcoming items at future meetings just provided for your information.

And unless there is any final comments anyone would like to make.

Mr. Boyd: — Any indication of what the next meeting date will be?

The Chair: — For the board?

Mr. Boyd: — Yes. What I'm asking, are these two items expected to be resolved shortly?

The Chair: — I expect them to be . . . The second one, item B, we can do any time we choose, because this is our discussion of an item provided today. Item A, I expect to be resolved prior to our budgetary considerations. I expect that in December we'll be in a position for the board to consider budget proposals for '99-2000, but that we'll have a meeting prior to that date for item no. A, would be my current expectation.

But I don't have an approximate time to give to you at this moment, but I would think it would be at least a month or two before December. So when we're in a position to have a tangible reason for a meeting, then we'll be in touch. I'm not expecting it over the summer months, but probably in the fall.

Anything else? If not, then this meeting stands adjourned.

The committee adjourned at 12.22 p.m.