

STANDING COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC ACCOUNTS

September 28, 2004

MINUTE NO. 11

1:00 p.m. - Room 8

1. **PRESENT:** Mr. Hermanson in the Chair and Members Bakken*, Borgerson, Hagel, Hart, Krawetz, Trew and Yates.

Other Member

Ms. Bakken for Mr. Hart (for consideration of the Department of Community Resources and Employment)

Provincial Auditor's Office

Fred Wendel, Provincial Auditor
Judy Ferguson, Deputy Provincial Auditor
Mike Heffernan, Deputy Provincial Auditor
Rodd Jersak, Principal
Leslie Wendel, Principal
Charlene Drotar, Manager
Stacey Ottenbreit, Manager

Provincial Comptroller's Office

Terry Paton, Provincial Comptroller
Chris Bayda, Executive Director, Financial Management Branch

2. The following documents that had been received during the intersessional period were tabled:

PAC 8/25 – Department of Finance: Public Accounts Detailed Payee Disclosure Thresholds, dated June 22, 2004.

PAC 9/25 – Department of Learning: Response to questions raised at the June 30, 2004 meeting of the committee, re: variance of actual costs versus estimates for the Teachers' Pensions and Benefits, and funding to co-ordinate the School^{Plus} program in school divisions, dated July 23, 2004.

PAC 10/25 – Saskatchewan Liquor and Gaming Authority: Response to question raised at the June 29, 2004 meeting of the committee, re: SIGA human resource policies relating to SIGA Executive Management employment contracts, development (training) guidelines, performance evaluation guidelines and policies relating to staff benefits, dated August 31, 2004.

3. The committee began consideration of Chapter 10 (Social Services) of the *2002 Fall Report of the Provincial Auditor (Volume 2)*, Chapter 9 (Community Resources and Employment) of the *2003 Report of the Provincial Auditor (Volume 1)*, Chapter 3 (Community Resources and Employment) of the *2003 Report of the Provincial Auditor (Volume 3)* and Chapter 15 (Community Resources and Employment) of the *2004 Report of the Provincial Auditor (Volume 1)*. Mr. Heffernan of the Office of the Provincial Auditor provided an overview of the chapters.

The following Department of Community Resources and Employment officials appeared before the committee and answered questions:

Witnesses

Wynne Young, Deputy Minister
Darrell Jones, Assistant Deputy Minister, Housing and Central Administration
Shelley Whitehead, Assistant Deputy Minister, Policy
Bob Wihlidal, Assistant Deputy Minister, Client Services
Don Allen, Executive Director, Finance and Property Management
Marilyn Hedlund, Executive Director, Child and Family Services
Phil Walsh, Executive Director, Employment and Income Assistance

4. The committee concurred with recommendation 3-1 made at page 101 of Chapter 3 (Community Resources and Employment) of the *2003 Report of the Provincial Auditor (Volume 3)* that the Department of Community Resources and Employment should follow its policies to ensure that children in its care are protected and that payments to care providers are authorized. The committee noted that the Department of Community Resources and Employment is making progress towards complying with the recommendation.
5. The committee concurred with recommendation 3-2 made at page 103 of Chapter 3 (Community Resources and Employment) of the *2003 Report of the Provincial Auditor (Volume 3)* that the Department of Community Resources and Employment should strengthen its service agreements with Community-Based Organizations (CBOs). The committee noted that the Department of Community Resources and Employment is making progress towards complying with the recommendation.
6. The committee concurred with recommendation 3-3 made at page 105 of Chapter 3 (Community Resources and Employment) of the *2003 Report of the Provincial Auditor (Volume 3)* that the Department of Community Resources and Employment should prepare a business continuity plan. The committee noted that the Department of Community Resources and Employment is making progress towards complying with the recommendation.
7. The committee concurred with recommendation 15-1 made at page 212 of Chapter 15 (Community Resources and Employment) of the *2004 Report of the Provincial Auditor (Volume 1)* that the Saskatchewan Housing Corporation's capital plan should show:
 - the specific measures the Corporation would use to determine the appropriate size, mix, and condition of the housing portfolio (i.e. performance measures);
 - the starting point of each measure (i.e. baseline); and
 - what the Corporation expects to achieve with the housing portfolio and by when (i.e. targets).The committee noted that the Saskatchewan Housing Corporation is making progress towards complying with the recommendation.
8. The committee recessed from 2:22 p.m. until 2:30 p.m.

9. The committee began consideration of Chapter 16 (Highways and Transportation) of the *2003 Report of the Provincial Auditor (Volume 3)* and Chapter 17 (Highways and Transportation) of the *2004 Report of the Provincial Auditor (Volume 1)*. Ms. Wendel of the Office of the Provincial Auditor provided an overview of the chapters.

The following Department of Highways and Transportation officials appeared before the committee and answered questions:

Witnesses

John Law, Deputy Minister

Terry Schmidt, Assistant Deputy Minister, Operations

Gary Diebel, Director, Finance and Administration

Curtis Goodfellow, Director, Human Resource Branch

Cathy Lynn Borbely, Manager, Business Development, Corporate Support Branch

10. The committee concurred with recommendation 17-1 made at page 246 of Chapter 17 (Highways and Transportation) of the *2004 Report of the Provincial Auditor (Volume 1)* that the Department of Highways and Transportation should develop and implement learning and development plans to ensure needed competencies are available. The committee noted that the Department of Highways and Transportation is making progress towards complying with the recommendation.
11. The committee concurred with recommendation 17-2 made at page 246 of Chapter 17 (Highways and Transportation) of the *2004 Report of the Provincial Auditor (Volume 1)* that the Department of Highways and Transportation should implement its plan to recruit and retain staff for key positions. The committee noted that the Department of Highways and Transportation is making progress towards complying with the recommendation.
12. The committee began consideration of Chapter 20 (Standing Committee on Public Accounts) of the *2004 Report of the Provincial Auditor (Volume 1)*. Mr. Jersak of the Office of the Provincial Auditor provided an overview of the chapter.
13. The committee adjourned at 4:11 p.m. until 9:00 a.m. on Wednesday, September 28, 2004.

Margaret A. Woods
Committee Clerk

Elwin Hermanson
Committee Chair