

Title: Thursday, June 2, 2005 Conflicts of Interest Act Review

Date: 05/06/02

Time: 10:33 a.m.

[Dr. Brown in the chair]

The Chair: Okay. I think we'll call the meeting to order here. We have one person, Ms Pastoor, who has indicated that she is – oh, there she is. Good. The timing is impeccable.

Ms Pastoor: Is there a penalty for being late or having cell phones ring?

The Chair: What I'd like to do is first of all welcome you all here to the first meeting of the Select Special Conflicts of Interest Act Review Committee, and I'd like to begin by having everyone introduce themselves. Perhaps we could start down on the far side with Rhonda.

Ms Sorensen: Yes. Rhonda Sorensen, communications co-ordinator with the office of the Clerk.

Mr. Reynolds: Good morning. I'm Rob Reynolds, Senior Parliamentary Counsel.

Mrs. Kamuchik: Louise Kamuchik, Clerk Assistant, director of House services.

Mr. Elsalhy: Mo Elsalhy, MLA for Edmonton-McClung. I'm not officially on this committee, but I'm here to observe.

Dr. B. Miller: Bruce Miller, Edmonton-Glenora.

Mr. Oberle: Good morning. Frank Oberle, Peace River.

Mr. Martin: Ray Martin, Edmonton-Beverly-Clareview.

Ms DeLong: Alana DeLong, Calgary-Bow.

Mrs. Sawchuk: Karen Sawchuk, committee clerk.

Dr. Brown: I'm Neil Brown, the chair of the committee.

Mr. Shariff: Shiraz Shariff, deputy chair of the committee.

Mr. Lukaszuk: Thomas Lukaszuk, Edmonton-Castle Downs.

Mr. Hamilton: Don Hamilton. I'm the Ethics Commissioner.

Ms South: Karen South. I'm senior administrator with the office of the Ethics Commissioner.

Ms Pastoor: Bridget Pastoor, MLA for Lethbridge-East.

Ms Croll: I'm Sandra Croll. I'm with the personnel administration office. I'm a senior labour relations adviser. One of the things that's part of my role is that I'm an adviser on the code of conduct for public servants, and I advise the ministries with respect to that.

Ms Dafoe: My name is Sarah Dafoe, and I'm a lawyer and policy adviser with Alberta Justice.

Mr. Neilson: Rob Neilson. I'm Sarah's assistant and summer student.

The Chair: I notice our intrepid and indefatigable member of the fifth estate, Paul McLoughlin, in the rear there. Thanks for coming, Paul. I appreciate your being here. Thank you all for being here.

I think the first order of business is to approve the agenda which has been circulated. If I could have a motion to that effect, please.

Ms Pastoor: So moved.

The Chair: All in favour? Any opposed? That's carried.

I just want to begin by making a few introductory remarks with your indulgence. It's an honour for me to be able to chair this committee. I think the work of this committee is important. It's important because the committee has been asked to review the legislation, the Conflicts of Interest Act, which sets the standard of conduct by which we as elected Members of the Legislative Assembly are governed. I know that the work of the committee which we are about to undertake is going to help to define the future standards by which all of us in public service are judged.

We know that the trust of elected officials right now is low. There are lots of things happening in the public eye, particularly in the federal scene right now, which make the esteem for public officials at a very low ebb. At the same time, the expectations of the public of the standards to which we will be held has never been higher, nor has the scrutiny of the conduct of elected officials been as intense. So we have to ensure, as we undertake our work, that we set very high standards of conduct. At the same time, we have to ensure that these standards of conduct are not so draconian or so inflexible or unreasonable that they deter capable and honest men and women from entering into public service, nor should they render elected officials incapable of carrying out their duties. So the challenge is to have a balance in the work that we're about to undertake.

I want to begin by talking a little bit about the mandate of the committee. This committee has been established by Government Motion 11, which was passed on March 8 of this year. It's located at tab 2A of your committee binders. The purpose of the committee is to review the Conflicts of Interest Act as provided in section 48 of the existing act. There is a requirement in there that we report within one year of commencement of our review. Now, that could be variously interpreted to mean one year from the date that the committee came into effect, I suppose, or probably more likely one year from today's date, which is when we are commencing our review of the act.

I want to begin by referring at the outset to the preamble of the Conflicts of Interest Act because I think it's useful as an overview of the purposes of the act. It, in fact, may be one of the considerations that we would want to look at, to incorporate that into the body of the act rather than having it as a preamble. It states in that preamble:

Whereas the ethical conduct of elected officials is expected in democracies;

Whereas Members of the Legislative Assembly are expected to perform their duties of office and arrange their private affairs in a manner that promotes public confidence and trust in the integrity of each Member, that maintains the Assembly's dignity and that justifies the respect in which society holds the Assembly and its Members; and

Whereas Members of the Legislative Assembly, in reconciling their duties of office and their private interests, are expected to act with integrity and impartiality.

It's my hope and expectation that our committee in our work, as we move forward, will keep in mind those important expectations and principles which are laid out in the preamble of that act.

10:40

I want to move to items 2(b) and (d) on the agenda under the orientation, and those are the support and the budget under Government Motion 11. That provides that

in carrying out its responsibilities, the committee may, with the concurrence of the head of the Department, utilize the services of the public service employed in that Department or the staff employed by the Assembly or the Office of the Ethics Commissioner.

So I'm pleased to say that we have been afforded all of those facilities, and the co-operation has been tremendous to date.

I want to say a little bit about the committee support. Karen Sawchuk is the committee clerk assigned to the committee, and she is going to provide us with the administrative, research, and general assistance that we require. Rhonda Sorensen is the communications co-ordinator with the Clerk's office, and she's going to provide the communications expertise to the committee. Rob Reynolds, the Senior Parliamentary Counsel from the Legislative Assembly Office, is going to assist the committee with respect to legal and procedural issues which may arise. Louise Kamuchik is the Clerk Assistant and director of House services, and she may also be available to assist us with procedural issues.

With respect to item 2(c), the general meeting procedures, the meetings will be held at my call as the chair or as agreed by the committee. We'll endeavour to accommodate the majority of members wherever we can. Meeting notices will be circulated to the committee members once we have set a date and a time, and we will try our best to make sure that the materials related to the agenda will be circulated a week prior to the meeting whenever that is possible.

During the meetings I will keep track of members wishing to ask questions or comment on items. I'll try to ensure that all members have an equal opportunity to be heard. Of course, all MLAs are welcome to attend this committee and to give their input and have discussion, although they do not have a formal vote. I'll ask that members try to keep their initial comments to about two minutes or less on each topic, and if time allows, we can come back for further comments.

The meetings are going to be recorded by *Hansard*, and the transcripts will be circulated to members and staff. That will prevail unless the committee decides at some point that they wish to have any meetings in camera.

The Legislature committees follow the rules set out in the Standing Orders. If there are any procedural questions or challenges, then we have Mr. Reynolds to provide us with assistance.

Budget funding, the next agenda item, 2(d). I have enclosed in the materials a copy of the committee's operating budget. That was approved by the Members' Services Committee at its March 16 meeting, and that budget is included for information purposes only.

I just want to make a couple of comments on the budget as it is presented. We have a budget of \$147,000 for the '05-06 fiscal year, and I want to say that that includes a possible allowance for travel to receive submissions in other parts of the province. By way of a little background there, on March 15 I was presented with a draft budget which I was to submit to the Members' Services Committee the following day, so I quickly made some adjustments to allow for that particular item in there, for travel to receive submissions. However, as I've reviewed the materials and spoken to people, I'm not yet persuaded that it will be necessary for the committee to travel to other parts of the province or that there's any great advantage to be gained by that.

There are a number of reasons for that, I think. First of all, we now have the benefit of some 13 years of experience with our own Alberta conflicts commissioner, our Ethics Commissioner, and his office will be available as a tremendous resource. I know that Mr.

Hamilton interacts on a regular basis with his colleagues across the country, so I know his office is going to be a tremendous resource in identifying the types of issues that we need to be looking at.

Secondly, we also have numerous precedents across the country in terms of legislated standards or codes of ethical conduct, and I think those can be useful road maps as to where this whole process should be going.

Thirdly, we also have the benefit of two previous reports that have been prepared: the Conflicts of Interest Review Panel of 1996, which is commonly referred to as the Tupper report, and the earlier, somewhat dated but very extensive, one from 1990, the report of the Conflict of Interest Review Panel, which is known as the Wachowich report.

Now, in your binder you'll find the full text of the Tupper report. In your reference materials you'll also find a summary of the Wachowich report. The reason that I didn't ask that that whole thing be duplicated is because it's very extensive. It is available in the library if you want to have a look at the full text. As I said, it's going back about 15 years now, so it is somewhat dated, but you do have the summary of the Wachowich report there.

Just in summarizing, I don't want to prejudge the matter, and it's certainly up to the committee as to whether or not they think it advisable to travel elsewhere in the province. It would be my advice that at this stage we should defer such a decision until later in the fall, when we become aware of the extent of the interest in the nature of the scope of the work of the committee and when we see what types of submissions and what interest there is in responding to the preliminary orientation that we will send out.

I'll just stop there very briefly and see whether or not there are any comments on what I've just related before we get into the formal part of the agenda and the substantive part of the agenda.

Ms Pastoor?

Ms Pastoor: Thank you. I'm just wondering: it's a little early in the game at this point, but will this stay sort of within this committee, or is it going to go public? Are there plans for that? I'm just thinking what I would do in my constituency, if I'd want to speak to people about what they think and that sort of thing. I certainly don't want to jump ahead, but I'm just wondering where that might fit into the process.

The Chair: Well, we'll discuss that when we get to the communications plan, but I think that we've got some definite ideas on the way that we want to advertise the work of the committee and to solicit submissions from not only stakeholders but the general public at large. I think we're going to deal with that a little bit later on the agenda, with your indulgence.

Ms Pastoor: Okay. Perfect. Thank you.

The Chair: Any other preliminary comments about the orientation or anything?

Dr. B. Miller: Well, I'd just like to reiterate what you said about the importance of this. It's a five-year review, right? Every five years this needs to be reviewed, and I think it's because there are changing expectations on the part of the public. When you think of 20, 25 years ago, you know, probably not many questions were raised about conflict of interest and so on, but it sure, sure has changed now. That's why legislation like this has to be looked at again and again, so I agree with you.

Also, the preamble. I think that it's an interesting point that you raise. The preamble to me is kind of weak because it doesn't really

refer to positive standards of ethics. The whole act is more on what's prohibited, the negative things that we, you know, expect that MLAs don't fall into. Positive standards, and I don't know whether that's what you had in mind, that there should be some statement of positive standards; in other words, we MLAs must come up and fulfill the highest ethical standards and incorporate those into the act. That might be difficult to actually reach a consensus on, but I respect that intention.

10:50

The Chair: Maybe not.

Dr. B. Miller: Yeah, maybe not. We could try it. I think that's really important, to have a positive statement not just a negative.

Ms DeLong: I'm just wondering, you know: when we look at the situation that we have in Canada right now in terms of the trust that politicians have at this point, is there a totally different system that we should also be looking at in terms of ethics somewhere else in the world? What are they doing in another country where there is actually a high regard for politicians? Perhaps we shouldn't be just looking at what we're doing here in Canada; perhaps we should be looking a little wider than that.

An Hon. Member: Can you think of one country?

Ms DeLong: I don't know.

Ms Pastoor: I think that we're considered the highest. We're in deep caca, so maybe we can clean it up.

Mr. Shariff: I concur with you.

The Chair: Any other comments that anyone would like to make before we move on to the substantive part of the agenda?

Ms Pastoor: Somewhere in all this stuff I know I read that in lieu of travelling, which I agree with you, there was a suggestion that people actually could come in and give us direction or, you know, just a lecture on their experience. I wouldn't be opposed to perhaps bringing people in from wherever. It's in here somewhere; I just can't find it again.

The Chair: Absolutely not.

Ms Pastoor: As opposed to all of us running out.

The Chair: That certainly is on the draft plan that we prepared. Yeah. At some point we're going to welcome people to come before the committee and make submissions.

Ms Pastoor: I think that there was somebody from Ottawa, but I can't find it in here. It was just people probably connected at that level, at the ethics commission level. Rather than us go, I think it would be good to perhaps follow along with what you're saying, to have those outside comments.

The Chair: Anything else?

Before we start on the substantive part of the agenda, I want to advise the committee that I had an earlier meeting with senior staff from Justice, the Legislative Assembly Office staff, and the office of the Ethics Commissioner to discuss their roles and how they can assist the work of the committee.

I've also worked with the Justice department staff to prepare these initial drafts, which you have in your binders, in terms of the terms of reference, the orientation guide, the timelines, and the suggested stakeholders. I've also requested – and I think this was done – that the Ethics Commissioner's office review the draft documents and have their necessary input into it. I think that Mr. Hamilton's office has had that opportunity to comment on all the materials that we have before us and that we're going to be discussing today.

With that, I think we'll move on to agenda item 3, which is the Draft Terms of Reference. I'll just caution that the phrase "terms of reference" in this document is perhaps a little bit misleading because, strictly speaking, the terms of reference that we have are those that have been set out by the Legislative Assembly in Government Motion 11. With that said, I will ask everyone to turn to that item, the terms of reference which you have in your binder.

Don or Karen, do you have any comments on the terms of reference? Is there anything that you would like to add?

Mr. Hamilton: I don't think so.

The Chair: Well, with that, then, I'll open the floor to any discussion by members that they have on that document at tab 3 in your materials. The proposed format really is the substantive part of it. Is there anything there that we have overlooked in terms of the major functioning of the committee?

Ms Pastoor: Bullet 2 under 2: the communications team will do all the advertising strategy et cetera, et cetera. Do we as a committee get to look at that, or is that just kind of done?

The Chair: Yeah, you'll have full input into the content of that for sure.

Ms Pastoor: Thank you.

The Chair: Any other comments?

Dr. B. Miller: Who prepares the consultation paper? The staff here?

Mrs. Sawchuk: Alberta Justice and Attorney General.

Dr. B. Miller: Okay.

Ms Dafoe: With the idea that we put together a draft for your approval, and then what changes the committee wanted could be made.

Dr. B. Miller: Oh, okay. So we'll have a chance to look at it then.

The Chair: Oh, for sure. Everyone will have an opportunity to have input into all those documents.

Mr. Shariff: I would also think that implicit in this is that not only will we have a chance to look at it, but we will have the opportunity to approve the proposals, whether it be communications or anything else, before it actually happens. Is that correct?

The Chair: Yeah, that's my understanding as well.

Any other comments regarding the terms of reference and the format of the review process?

Then hearing no other comments, I would accept a motion that the committee approve the terms of reference as distributed.

Mr. Martin: So moved.

The Chair: Mr. Martin.

Any discussion? All in favour? Any opposed? That's carried.

Then we'll move on to the next item, which is the timelines for review. This is something that I worked with the Justice department to bring together. It should be borne in mind that this is simply a draft set of timelines for review. We did the draft timelines with a view to accomplishing this thing within the one-year parameter. In fact, we provided a little bit of cushion in there. You'll see that we're tentatively aiming to complete the report and to report to the Legislative Assembly by February. We do have a little bit of latitude there, as I mentioned earlier, with respect to the timelines that were given to us in our mandate. So these are tentative due dates, just goals to shoot for at the present time.

I will invite members to give us any comments that they have with respect to the proposed timelines for the review.

Mr. Shariff: Mr. Chairman, I'm looking at the launching of the website timeline being June 20, and today is – what? – June 2. I'm just wondering if any work has already occurred in that matter.

Ms Sorensen: We do have a basic template that we do use for all reviews. Essentially, once we get established today what the wishes of the committee are, we can start putting up the consultation guide and any other public information that is deemed necessary. We can probably turn that around within three to five days.

Mr. Shariff: Okay. Great.

Ms Pastoor: Six: the "Committee to hold public forum in Edmonton and/or Calgary." I'm not sure I understand that public forum as opposed to public meetings with whomevers to put input. What is that?

The Chair: I think we put that in there with a view to an option or a possibility for the committee to consider. Like I mentioned before, the more that I've reviewed it, I'm not convinced that, you know, going out to the public at large and seeking submissions would be terribly productive because it might turn into something that is not necessarily – well, we would be reinventing the wheel.

I think that the issues before the committee are fairly obvious, quite frankly. I think that they're known to us as we set out upon this. There may be some surprise suggestions that we don't know about, but I think that with the input of the Ethics Commissioner's office, as I said, the previous reports, the experience in other jurisdictions, with all these things together I think that we're going to have a pretty good idea what the issues are. I think that it's up to us to discuss the application of those issues and to see how we can come out with some amendments to be proposed.

11:00

Ms Pastoor: I agree with that, and I think you're right on track, but I still don't understand the public forum in Edmonton and/or Calgary. I guess my point is that – guess what? – there's a Lethbridge.

The Chair: Yeah. If we're going to have one, Ms Pastoor, I would think that that's when it would have to be if we fit in with the guidelines to get to February. If we were going to seek public input and accept public submissions, whether it's here or Calgary or whatever, then that would be sort of the ideal time, I would think, the end of the summer, an opportunity to have some input into the

proceedings before they get too far down the track. So that was the idea.

Mr. Shariff: Mr. Chairman, if I've understood you clearly today as we have discussed some of these matters, my understanding is that not only is this a draft, but this is also a work in progress, and that as we proceed into this review, we may find that we need to amend some of these steps and timelines. Is that correct?

The Chair: Very much so. As I mentioned at the outset, I think it's very much a draft. It's sort of a tentative road map as to how we're going to get to the end result, which would be, as I said, by February of next year, to aim to have our report ready for submission to the Assembly by that time.

Mr. Martin.

Mr. Martin: Yes. Thank you. As was said, the draft can be changed. I know that it looks like we're going to be asked to approve the consultation paper fairly quickly. The consultation paper, the format, I think is going to set the tone and perhaps the direction, and I'm wondering if we have any idea how that is laid out. Is it questions, or how is that going to come about? I think that's a very important first step.

The Chair: Ms Dafoe, would you like to comment on that?

Ms Dafoe: Sure. I can tell you some of the thoughts that I've had, but really I was waiting to see what happened at this meeting before formalizing any plan. We thought of perhaps starting with the orientation paper as a template and then taking the end part of that orientation paper, which talks about issues for consideration, and expanding on some of the larger issues, perhaps raising broader issues but, then, also in it asking some specific, pointed questions to help focus some of the consultation reports.

What I was hoping for from the committee today is an idea of what issues they see as the most important ones to include in the consultation paper because that will help focus the responses that we get. Certainly, in the consultation paper I think it's always important to put something along the lines of: do you have any other comments or concerns? I'm sure that there will be issues raised that we haven't asked pointed questions on, and the committee can look at those in the fall.

Mr. Martin: Okay. In other words, we'd be looking at this a little later on in the agenda then. Is that correct?

Ms Dafoe: At the orientation guide? Yeah. Then, as I say, for the consultation paper it would be a blown-up version.

Mr. Martin: Okay. Thank you.

The Chair: I think our next meeting, actually, would be very much focused on that very issue because if we're going to get it out and set up the website, then the next step, really, is to do the orientation guide so that we can orient the stakeholders and the public at large as to what we're about.

Are there any other comments on the timelines?

Then could I have a motion that the committee approve the draft timelines as presented? Mr. Oberle. Any discussion? All in favour? Any opposed? That's carried.

Okay. Now we move on to item 5, which is the orientation guide. This is really a matter for orientation of the committee. It's really not necessary for us to have a motion or anything to accept this, but

feel free to make any comments that you have on your mind relating to it at this point.

Does anybody have any comments?

You'll see that under the principles in this document many of the same objectives that I alluded to earlier in the preamble to the Conflicts of Interest Act are reiterated there with respect to public confidence and integrity and impartiality and so on. Those principles are very much iterated in this document.

Any comment, Mr. Shariff?

Mr. Shariff: I just want to ask if the Ethics Commissioner has any comments on these. Are there any subject matters that are not included there that we may want to or we should be looking into?

Mr. Hamilton: No. I think that in the earlier meetings we raised two issues that we really want to have a good look at.

Mr. Shariff: And they are part of this?

Mr. Hamilton: No.

Mr. Shariff: It's separate. Okay. We'll get to that then. Thanks.

Mr. Oberle: On page 2 of that document, is there any significance to the fact that the first bullet at the bottom refers to "elected officials" and the remaining bullets refer to "Members of the Legislative Assembly?" Should the first bullet not refer to Members of the Legislative Assembly?

Ms Dafoe: Those bullets were taken straight from the preamble, so they are just a reflection of what the act says right now. I guess that if this turns into a consultation paper, if there's other language that the committee would prefer, we could use different words than taking straight from the preamble, certainly.

Mr. Oberle: Okay. This is not broad: elected officials across Alberta.

The Chair: Well, I think it could certainly be well beyond. I mean, the verbiage in the act – I think it's section 48, if my memory serves me correctly – states that it's a "comprehensive review" of the act. "Comprehensive" would certainly give us wide latitude to look at who the act covered, and it could well go beyond elected officials or MLAs. I think that that's the consensus.

Maybe Parliamentary Counsel would like to comment on that issue.

Mr. Reynolds: Well, thank you, Mr. Chair. The first thing is with respect to your point. Not that Ms Dafoe needs any support, but I believe the first point in the recital in the preamble refers to "the ethical conduct of elected officials is expected in democracies." I think that's where the "elected officials" comes in. I think it's a broad theoretical point that perhaps wasn't entirely reproduced in the first point, but I think that's where it comes from.

With respect to the comprehensive review in section 48 of the act, which is the provision under which this committee was formed – and I believe it's referenced in a government motion that established the terms of reference for this committee – it does say "comprehensive review" of the act, which is more than just a review of the act. I think that tends to broaden the scope of the review, Mr. Chair. That's my only point. So you're not, strictly speaking, I would imagine, confined to what is in the act now.

11:10

The Chair: Thank you.

Any other comments? Then I'll just make a couple of comments regarding the reference materials. I alluded earlier to the two conflicts of interest review panel reports that preceded this committee's work, and those were the Tupper report and the Wachowich report. Those reports are in your binders. I would highly commend them to all of the members. If you haven't had an opportunity to read and familiarize yourselves with the contents of those reports, I highly suggest – strongly suggest – that you take the time to do so. Also, the Conflicts of Interest Act that we have now has also been included in your materials. I find it a very difficult document to get through, that Conflicts of Interest Act. I think we could certainly work on making it more reader friendly in the end result.

Those three documents that you have in your reference materials will be a very solid source of information for you as we go on and look at what the issues are. I think that if you look at those recommendations that are in the Tupper report and the Wachowich report and you put it together with the Conflicts of Interest Act, you'll have a pretty good idea of some of the issues that the committee will be asked to deal with.

There was another item that was missed on the initial meeting agenda which is on your revised agenda, and that is the Potential Issues for Consideration by the Committee, which was put out by the Ethics Commissioner's office. I apologize for not having that in your materials in the first instance, but it should be in your materials now. It was also e-mailed out to everyone on Tuesday, I believe, Karen, was it not? Yeah. That's an item for information purposes only.

Maybe at this point I would invite the Ethics Commissioner, Mr. Hamilton, or Ms South to comment on it.

Mr. Hamilton: We thought it would be helpful to have your people see what's going on in Canada. On the third page there you can see that some are doing some things and some are not. We thought that would be helpful. Other than the letter that's there . . .

The Chair: Karen, do you have anything to add?

Ms South: We prepared this just as an example of some of the issues that over time have been brought forward in relation to either our office or conflicts of interest or ethical behaviour generally. Some of them do flow from the Tupper report, that were not implemented at that time. There was draft lobbyist registration legislation at one point. It was not proceeded with by the House. The standards of conduct question comes up periodically. We just prepared this as an example of some things that have been associated with the Conflicts of Interest Act over the past several years. Senior officials, again, were dealt with in the Tupper report.

The last page is basically to let you know both about the Conflict of Interest Network, the annual meeting of our colleagues, and the Council on Governmental Ethics Laws, some of the information they have, and that our office is willing to provide whatever assistance we can.

The Chair: Well, thank you very much for preparing that. I think it's an excellent document and appreciate the contribution.

Mr. Hamilton: Mr. Chairman, would it be appropriate to talk about the people coming from the east, that we had the discussion about?

The Chair: Yeah. I was going to do that, Mr. Hamilton, at the end here.

Mr. Hamilton: Okay. That's fine.

The Chair: But this is a good opportunity, perhaps, to do that. You and I had some discussions this morning about some possible interactions there. Maybe you could just share those with the committee.

Mr. Hamilton: One of the issues is lobbyists, and Ontario and Ottawa have a system in place. I think, Karen, that it's true that they're probably the best. We have an organization, and we meet every fall. It's called CCOIN; I still don't know what that stands for. We are hosting them here in September.

The Chair: Just for clarification these are the conflicts-of-interest commissioners from all of the jurisdictions in Canada, including the federal. Am I correct?

Mr. Hamilton: Yeah. Right.

The Chair: And they're coming here this fall.

Mr. Hamilton: The people that are coming are going to come on the Thursday, and the chair suggested a place for them to talk to you about how their system works.

The Chair: What I've suggested to Mr. Hamilton – and he's readily agreed – is that if there's an opportunity, I think it's a really good opportunity for us to have the input of the experience of some of the conflicts commissioners from other jurisdictions right across the country. They're going to be here on the 9th and 10th; isn't it, Don?

Mr. Hamilton: Yes.

The Chair: I understand that some of them, at least, will be arriving earlier, on September 8, so I am trying to organize on September 8 in the evening perhaps a bit of a round-table discussion that we could have with anyone that's available and willing to meet with us. Then I thought we could follow that up with a little bit of a reception for the commissioners, so invite anybody to come to that, all our members, of course, and maybe see what the emerging issues are, particularly in other jurisdictions, and how their experience in administering their own acts is working out.

So thanks, Don, for organizing that for us.

Ms Pastoor: Mr. Chair, we were talking about conflict, but we had started off with lobbyists, and I'd just like to perhaps throw in a bit of information that I picked off the Internet, believe it or not. I don't really know how to work it, but never mind. As of yesterday the federal government is increasing stronger Lobbyists Registration Act regulations. So it's just something to know, that lobbyist conversation is going on across Canada as well as conflicts of interest.

The Chair: If there are no other comments, then I'm going to move on.

Thanks, Mr. Hamilton and Ms South, for your input there.

We're going to move on to item 7 on the agenda, Stakeholder Lists. It's tab 6 in your binders, I believe. These lists are a bit of a joint effort, I gather, from Ms Dafoe in the Justice department and Ms South in the Ethics Commissioner's office. The intent would be to use this stakeholder list to be recipients of the materials that we send out and to solicit input from all of those various groups to the review. So before I get to comments on it, I'd just like to turn this over to Ms Dafoe, perhaps, and Ms South to make a comment on the list of stakeholders that they've put together.

Ms Dafoe: All right. Well, it's a bit of a hodgepodge. We tried to collect groups not only including conflicts-of-interest commissioners from other provinces and integrity commissioners from other provinces but also including on that list watchdog groups and people that have shown an interest in ethics-related issues, either by way of publications – we've got some of the people that were involved with the Tupper report. I believe the Public Affairs Bureau is on here in case there's a discussion regarding whether the act should extend to senior government officials. All the MLAs in Alberta are on here because they are directly affected by any decisions that may be made to change the act.

I think those are the highlights.

Karen, do you have anything that you want to add to that?

11:20

Ms South: I think you've covered it.

The Chair: Mr. Oberle, you had a comment on that, the stakeholder list.

Mr. Oberle: Yeah. The first stakeholder, the AUMA – I would suggest that the AAMDC should be on there as well.

Ms Dafoe: The AAMDC: that's municipal districts?

Mr. Oberle: Municipal districts and counties, yeah. Rural municipalities.

Ms Dafoe: Sure.

The Chair: Thank you.

Are there any other comments or suggestions?

Dr. B. Miller: You know, in terms of ethics and the development of ethics, medical ethics is the area where there's been so much written and thought about over the years. So the Dossetor Health Ethics Centre – I'm not sure – must have at some point investigated the whole issue of physicians and their role in industry in relation to work in hospitals, and so on. So it might be worth putting them on the list.

Ms Dafoe: I'm sorry. Could you spell that?

Dr. B. Miller: D-o-s-s-e-t-o-r. They're right here at the University of Alberta hospital.

The Law Reform Institute: I don't know what they have been working on in this area. That would be worth finding out, but you must know.

Ms Dafoe: You know, it's strange that they're usually my fallback on any stakeholder list, and I don't think they're on this one.

Dr. B. Miller: No, they're not on the list.

Mr. Martin: If we were broadly looking at elected politicians in the province, there are two groups that deal with school trustees: the Alberta School Boards Association and the Public School Boards' Association. They may have some interest in it.

The Chair: Any further comments?

Dr. B. Miller: Given my background, of course, religious groups are all interested, but I think that if you started that list, you would have

a huge, huge list. I don't know quite how to handle that. Of course, religious groups are interested in ethics and how that impacts the public sphere, but I wouldn't know whom to suggest. I think that maybe we're better off staying with these kinds of more secular organizations of ethics that are listed here.

The Chair: Well, we've got your experience, Dr. Miller.

Dr. B. Miller: Right. Which sometimes comes to the fore and can't be held back. You're right.

Mr. Hamilton: Mr. Chair, it's interesting that you raise that because I'm going to the burn unit at the University hospital in two weeks to talk with them about the ethics of the things that they're doing. It's not under my jurisdiction, but they invited me to come there. It's a very real thing for them, for all the hospitals.

The Chair: Any other suggestions? I think the objective is to circulate this thing, basically, as widely as we can to get efficient input. Anything else?

Mr. Shariff: I want to just make a suggestion that if any members come across any groups or institutions that specialize in this field or do comment on such subjects, you could submit those names to the chairman for consideration and for distribution.

The Chair: Absolutely.

Ms Dafoe: I think that as part of the advertising or the communications plan the paper will be available on the website. But perhaps I'm anticipating the next item on the agenda.

The Chair: Any other comments?

Then I think we'll move next to item 8 on the agenda, Draft Communications Plan. I believe that's tab 7 in your binder. This was drafted by Ms Sorensen, so I'll invite her to make some comments and to respond to any questions.

Ms Sorensen: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. In keeping with the proposed terms of reference for this committee, the main purpose of this plan is to make sure that Albertans and key stakeholders are aware of the review and that they are invited to provide input should they choose to do so. I'm just going to touch on some of the main strategies and points of the plan and then will invite any questions from any members.

The main strategies that I'm recommending are media relations in terms of news releases and information bulletins, internal and external direct communications, website fact sheets and/or presentation material. Of course, probably the largest portion of this will be the advertising.

For media relations I'm suggesting that we appoint one person as the spokesperson on behalf of this committee, and I'm suggesting that Dr. Brown would be the most appropriate for that as the chair of the committee. In terms of news releases I anticipate four primary news releases, the first creating awareness of the review and its purpose, a series of information bulletins if required. Once the consultation guide has been prepared, then we can release information on where the guide can be found and invite input on it as well as a release when the final report is tabled.

Are there any questions on that particular strategy, or should I continue?

The Chair: Any comments, questions from members?

Ms Sorensen: The second strategy is internal and external direct communications, and that's in keeping with the list of stakeholders, inviting them directly to provide input as well as making sure that all members of the Assembly are aware that this is going on and where to find information on that. This comes at no cost to the committee in terms of the communications budget.

The website, as I alluded to earlier, will contain information such as the consultation guide, fact sheets, news releases, committee meeting dates, and any other public information as it pertains to the committee and its mandate. All news releases and advertisements will refer to this site so that people will know where to find the information. There will also be other contact information. As hard as it is to believe, not everybody is online these days, so we will have other forms of getting information out there as well.

The fact sheets and presentation material will really be determined by how this committee progresses. If we do go out to public meetings, then it's probably in your best interest to have some sort of material to hand to the public so that they're really aware of what the main points are without having to go through a lot of extensive material that they may not understand. So it's always good to try and bring things down to as simple as possible so that everybody understands what's going on. That is a very minimal cost if it is something that the committee chooses to do.

The largest portion of the budget will come through the advertising. I've broken it down into two main campaigns. The initial advertising: once we do have the consultation and the website and everything in order, we will do an Alberta-wide campaign in the 108 publications that are part of the Alberta Weekly Newspapers Association. I'm suggesting that the ad be black and white, three columns by about seven inches. The cost for that is approximately \$24,000. To place the same size ad in all of the eight major dailies in Alberta, the cost is approximately \$7,000. I'm suggesting that we do it during the week because the rates are cheaper; however, if you do decide to go to a weekend in the dailies, you're looking at approximately an additional \$8,000.

Having said that, I have left \$23,000 to advertise the public meetings if the committee chooses to do that. I really can't give you specific numbers until we know where those meetings would be because the cost of advertising would be determined by the papers in which it's going.

That, Mr. Chairman, brings our total estimated communication cost to approximately \$55,000.

The Chair: Comments?

Ms Pastoor: I just wanted to go back to something that you said about the dailies, that it's cheaper during the week.

Ms Sorensen: Yes.

Ms Pastoor: However, many people don't take it during the week. They only take it on Friday because they get the TV guide.

Ms Sorensen: That's a good point. I just wanted to make sure that the committee is aware that it does bring the costs up.

11:30

Mr. Martin: I'm just curious where Fort McMurray fits.

Ms Sorensen: Fort McMurray should be listed in there. If it's not, it very well may be a weekly or a biweekly.

Mr. Martin: It's at least biweekly. I think it's a daily, but I'm not sure.

Ms Sorensen: Is it? Okay, we can certainly look into that.

Mr. Martin: I'd just check that out.

Ms Sorensen: You bet. It's *Fort McMurray Today*? Is that the name?

Mr. Martin: Yes.

The Chair: Any other comments or suggestions?

Mr. Shariff: What would the difference be if it is put on Fridays? Will there be a difference in price?

Ms Sorensen: Yes. The rates for all of the dailies go up. Of course, in the weeklies you have no choice; it goes whenever they come out. But on the dailies the rates do vary quite significantly per line, so you're looking at approximately an additional \$8,000 for the entire daily campaign.

The Chair: Ms Pastoor.

Ms Pastoor: Yes. Are these rates straight across the board for all of these newspapers? They vary with each newspaper, do they not?

Ms Sorensen: They vary greatly. In fact, the size ad that I'm recommending in, say, the *Lethbridge Herald* is \$447. In the *Calgary Herald* it's \$1,680.

Ms Pastoor: That's for the weekend? That's the weekend rate?

Ms Sorensen: Yes. It's based on their circulation and whatnot.

Ms Pastoor: Well, I would like to see it on a Friday, but anyway.

The Chair: Further comments?

Mr. Shariff: Mr. Chairman, just as a general principle, I'm reflecting on previous advertisements on reviews or other such matters, and I don't recall what day they would normally be advertised. Do we have any precedents in the past?

Ms Sorensen: No. It's really at the wish of the committee where they would prefer to advertise. I'm simply recommending weekdays because it's cheaper, but you do also have to balance that against the higher circulation on weekends plus the leisure which people have to read their paper on the weekends that they don't normally have in the week.

Mr. Shariff: The target group that we want to reach, does it really matter whether it's on a weekday or a weekend day? Does it matter?

Ms Sorensen: The public at large is kind of a hard group to pin down as a target audience because everybody is so completely different. Yes, there are a lot of people who only get the paper on the weekend, myself included, but there are those as well that get it every day and skim through the ads, and there are those that read it cover to cover and some that may just skim it. So it's really hard to pinpoint.

The Chair: The issue of whether or not it's the weekend or during the week, is that something that we could maybe defer until the next meeting? It's really the consultation guide that is sort of predicated

upon this whole thing, so can we perhaps reserve judgment on that until we find out what the differential would be?

Ms Sorensen: Absolutely.

The Chair: Well, with that caveat, then, would somebody be willing to make a motion to approve the . . .

Mr. Shariff: Mr. Chairman, before you make the motion: the communication plan is to only advertise it once?

Ms Sorensen: Yes. That is to advertise the fact that this group actually exists, and then we can do another ad. It depends. If we do the community meetings, that will need to be advertised. If we don't use that money in the community meetings, then we could always do an advertisement after the fact to announce that the review has taken place, for example, and these are the main recommendations. It's really at your leisure how much you want to put into the advertising, keeping in mind that we do have the other strategies such as the website that can be updated at any time as well as new releases.

The Chair: Right. We need to make it clear. It's understood that all the stakeholders are going to get these consultation materials separately anyway. What we're doing in this advertising is basically soliciting input from others who are not captured by our lists.

Ms Sorensen: The public at large, really.

The Chair: Yeah. The public at large.

Dr. B. Miller: The premise that you began with, Mr. Chairman, at the very beginning was the widespread cynicism of the general public in elected officials. There are references here to promoting of "public confidence in the integrity of elected officials." As long as it's not understood that we are somehow trying to solve that because that's such a huge, huge issue and \$55,000 doesn't go nearly far enough to get at that. That's a huge, huge issue. This communication strategy is just focusing on our committee and making sure that the public knows what the committee is about and asking for input.

The Chair: Yeah. That's the key: soliciting input.

Dr. B. Miller: So it's a narrow focus. This is a huge problem which we face, you know, as all MLAs, as all elected officials: how we can capture a renewed confidence of the public in what we do.

The Chair: Are there any other comments on the draft communications plan then?

Okay. With the proviso that we will investigate the additional cost and make consideration of whether or not the dailies ought to be advertised in on the weekend versus the weekdays, could I have someone make a motion

to accept the communications plan as presented?

Ms DeLong.

Ms DeLong: I'll make that motion, yes.

The Chair: Okay. Any discussion on the motion? All in favour, then? Any opposed? That's carried.

The one other issue that I have on my agenda here before we speak about the date of the next meeting is the issue of bringing in an outside contract writer. This, apparently, is something that is not

included in the budget. I would just invite Karen, maybe, to make a comment on that and what the practice has been in other review committees of legislation.

Mrs. Sawchuk: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. What we've done before with other statute review committees is have the department providing the technical support draft the reports for the committee. In this case, Justice has indicated that they're unable to do that, so they have provided us with some information on services of a contract writer.

The reason it becomes kind of an important issue at this point is that it's anticipated that someone who would be completing the reports on the committee's behalf should be attending the meetings so they're aware of all the issues as they come up and can do that type of thing. We didn't budget for that type of expenditure specifically; however, there is an ability for us to utilize funds within our full committee budget envelope, if you want to call it that. We could cover the costs of that if that's what the committee chose to do.

There was some information available from Justice. They have used the services of a number of different contract writers, and they did provide us with some ballpark figures. It was Ray Bodnarek who had provided us with that. I do have the e-mail that he had initially sent. I don't know whether it's considered expensive or not, but it looks like the cost could be anywhere from \$15,000 to \$20,000. I would believe that the committee would have to make a motion in this regard since it isn't something that was provided for in the budget and it isn't something that was you know looked at initially.

Ms Pastoor: Could I get a clarification from Sarah? What process would have been followed that you would have had that person? How did you choose that person? What process was followed?

Ms Dafoe: Basically, as I understand it – I'm not sure if Ray talked about just one person or if he listed a couple of them, Karen.

Mrs. Sawchuk: Just the one that was available, I believe.

Ms Dafoe: Okay. It's my understanding that this person was someone that Justice had worked with before, I believe on the family law mediation project, and Justice was very happy with the work that that person did. The feeling was that a professional writer is able to perhaps communicate ideas in a manner that's more clear than what I might do as a person trained with a law degree. You know, there are more accessible ways of writing than reading what a lawyer has written.

11:40

Ms Pastoor: Amen.

I can certainly appreciate the value of contract writers. That's not what my question really is. I guess my question is: did it go to an RFP? How many people had a chance to actually have this particular piece of work? I'm really interested in the process of arriving at one person.

Ms Dafoe: Yeah. We're not recommending this particular person. We just know that this particular person is available for the time that the committee will be meeting. There was no RFP put out, and certainly Justice is not saying: we need this person. Justice is just recommending that, if possible, hiring a writer would be good.

Ms Pastoor: Okay. Thank you.

Mr. Martin: Well, \$15,000 or \$20,000 in a budget of \$147,000 is a fair chunk of cash, and I don't know if there's a need for this person or not at this particular time. Perhaps we need to relook at the budget, because that's fairly significant, before we make this sort of decision. I'm not sure that somebody within our committee might be able to do this. I don't think we're – at least, I'm not – ready to make a decision with that amount of money.

Ms DeLong: I know that on other committees that I've been on, the writer wasn't necessarily there for the whole time. Especially in this situation, where we, you know, will have minutes to all of our meetings, perhaps there is a less expensive way for us to do it later on in the process.

The Chair: Just to get some help with respect to the layout and maybe the style of the writing, but we could certainly get the preliminary. I agree with you.

Any other comments?

Dr. B. Miller: Yeah. I'm not sure what the scope – I mean, do we think we're going to write a report like the Tupper report? If it's just that we're going to bring significant amendments towards, perhaps, legislation to amend the act, then I'm not sure that we need a writer.

The Chair: Just to clarify there, the practice in previous review committees certainly has not been to draft the legislation. We're not in the business of drafting. What we would do is make recommendations on the substantive issues that we see that we want to have incorporated by way of amendment, so there's no need to get into the technical art of the drafting process. It's simply that we would make recommendations in layman's terms on what we want to see in the substance of the act and take it from there.

Any other comments on the issue of a contract writer?

Ms Dafoe: I was only going to mention that the benefit of having someone come on earlier would be that they'd be able to assist in the creation of the consultation document as well as the final report. The consultation document is the one that's going out to the stakeholders and the public, so that, in particular, having a clear tone is very helpful. That being said, if the committee decides that a writer would only be appropriate for the final report, you know, that's also fine.

Mr. Shariff: I think there's one important aspect about the review process, and that is that the submissions that we shall receive may have a lot of technical information. Therefore, it will be very important for somebody to be able to decipher that and be able to put it into a language that everybody else understands and then eventually communicate back to the Legislature. There is that element that I see, a need for at least some person, whether it's a research person or a writer, to be part of the process.

The Chair: Mrs. Sawchuk has just mentioned to me that there are templates that exist on the previous reports, and there's sort of a generic template that we would be able to follow with respect to the format of the writing. That certainly would be a benefit to the committee without the necessity of, you know, reinventing the wheel, I suppose.

Mrs. Sawchuk: Mr. Chairman, one of the things that we found after we completed the FOIP review back in 2002 was that it seemed to make sense that the final report follow the same format as the consultation guide. We've kind of carried that through; we did it

again with the Health Information Act review this past fall. You'd get into things like an executive summary at the beginning, which has all of the committee's recommendations that they're going to take forward, and then the balance of the document pretty well follows the consultation guide.

In that is basically a summary of all of the responses received and how they relate to each question and the percentages. You know, it's actually a very extensive undertaking. With the other committees there were people who were dedicated strictly to working on the report, and in some cases those reports have been anywhere from 50 to a hundred pages long. They can be very long. That's where the money portion of the calculation comes in. It is a lot of writing involved.

I guess it depends, too, on the number of questions that are going to be asked and how big that consultation guide is going to be.

Ms Pastoor: Sorry. Mr. Chair, could I just get a clarification? Are you saying that you've used the same template for both of those last two reviews that you spoke about?

Mrs. Sawchuk: With respect to categories, you know, like executive summary and then following the style that was set out for the consultation guide for each of the committees. So however they had set it up. It was like a question shown, the types of responses received, summaries: that kind of thing.

Ms Pastoor: Okay. When was the last time an evaluation was done on the effectiveness of the actual template?

Mrs. Sawchuk: Actually, for this last review the Health Information Act Review Committee was very specific on the formatting of the report and how it was released. They wanted it to be people friendly. They wanted someone to be able to pick it up and to be able to go through it and pick out the points of interest, so they did fine-tune it a lot at that point.

Ms Pastoor: Okay. Right. Thank you.

Mr. Lukaszuk: Mr. Chairman, I had the immense pleasure of sitting on both of the committees, the FOIP review and the Health Information Act review. Just by way of advice to my colleagues: unless one of the members of this committee wishes to spend a whole summer drafting a discussion report and then the actual final report, which will be voluminous, and we will receive information and written essays by a majority of the stakeholders, I don't see any other way but retaining a writer either from the department or from the private sector.

The Chair: Any other comments or suggestions? Does the committee want to deal with the issue today, or do you think it's necessary to make this decision now?

Dr. B. Miller: Especially with the consultation. If that person could start working on that, then we should decide today.

Mr. Shariff: I don't mind making a motion to support this. I will make a motion that the committee approve a budget to recruit a professional writer in the amount of up to \$20,000.

Ms Pastoor: Could I get a clarification on how you're going to recruit them? Would it be an RFP?

Ms DeLong: It would cost more to do an RFP.

The Chair: Sorry. What was the question?

Ms Pastoor: What process would you use to hire this person, and would it be an RFP? Yes, I do understand that it would be more expensive, but also I think it's fair.

Ms DeLong: No. It'll cost more than \$20,000 to do the RFP.

Ms Pastoor: I think it's ethical to open it up in an RFP format.

The Chair: Ms Sorensen, could you perhaps enlighten us there?

Ms Sorensen: I could certainly write an RFP for the next meeting if that is the wish of the committee, and that could go out to professional writers in Alberta. However, keep in mind – I'll just qualify this – that an RFP process does take a lot longer, so you're probably looking at about a month's turnaround to do an RFP, get it approved by you, get it out to the writers, and get the proposals back.

11:50

Ms Pastoor: I still believe it's an ethical way to do it.

Ms DeLong: And how much will it cost us to do an RFP?

Ms Sorensen: Nothing. I can write the RFP.

Ms DeLong: So we assume your time is free?

Ms Sorensen: Pretty much. It is a part of my job as communications support to this committee.

Mr. Martin: Well, I come back to my point. Maybe we need this, but we have a \$147,000 budget. Now we're talking \$20,000 – I don't know what we're talking about – that has to come from somewhere within that \$147,000. I don't know where it comes from, to be honest, at this particular time, how we do that. It seems like we're jumping ahead of a budget.

Ms DeLong: Just that in terms of somebody who can help with the writing, we do have somebody in communications who I'm sure is – you know, one of your requirements is that you are capable in terms of communications. It seems to me that perhaps we should be using your services to help with this first document rather than using your services to do an RFP. If we do need a writer later on, okay. Perhaps at that point we could hire a writer.

Ms Sorensen: Well, if I may, Mr. Chairman. As Mr. Lukaszuk had referred to earlier, this is a huge undertaking, and our staff simply don't have the resources to put into that consultation guide and final report. I do believe it somewhat falls outside of my job in terms of lending support and counsel to the committee. That would be my only comment.

The Chair: Mr. Lukaszuk, you had a comment?

Mr. Lukaszuk: Mr. Chairman, I think we all agree on the fact that there is a need, that someone has to write the report. Reports simply don't write themselves. There seems to be a perception that government employees are free labour. Unless they have recently become volunteers and I did not receive that memo, I think we're paying them for what they do. So if we second resources from the department to write the report for us, we're still paying for the service. It may not be coming directly out of this committee's

budget, but the government is still paying for those employees to draft a report.

If one of the members of this committee decides to volunteer and write the report, I imagine that the member of this committee will be billing this committee for the time spent on writing this report. So if we do all agree that we need a writer, I really don't understand how we think we are going manage to get away with getting this report written for free. And a monumental task it is.

The Chair: Well, just to clarify, Mr. Lukaszuk, there won't be any extra pay for any members of the committee that decide that they want to get involved in the writing process. The only thing that committee members will be compensated for will be their per diem for their meetings.

Further comments? Mr. Martin, did you have a comment?

Mr. Martin: Well, I'm not against it necessarily, but for us just to say "here's \$20,000" – that has to come somewhere out of the budget. I feel a little uncomfortable. What are we cutting back on to do this? I don't think we've had that discussion. Maybe we need to do it for the next meeting.

Dr. B. Miller: Well, even the point you raised about not having to do the travel to Calgary or Lethbridge or other places affects the budget, right? So this budget seems to be in flux. I'm in favour of a writer. So, yeah, I guess if we have to spend the money, we spend the money.

Mrs. Kamuchik: Mr. Chair, I was going to mention that the budget that was approved by the Members' Services Committee provided for public hearings in, I believe, five communities at the time. If the committee chooses not to travel, there will be money left in this current budget.

The Chair: So in a way we're making that decision on the travel. We're pre-empting that if we approve this. That's what Mr. Martin's point was.

Mr. Shariff: Mr. Chairman, the amount that I suggested was up to \$20,000. I hope that, you know, we will be asking more than one person to submit a proposal for undertaking this exercise, and I hope that we'll be able to find somebody at a much lower rate than the \$20,000 that I'm suggesting. You know, we have an experience with one individual or one company, but that should not preclude us from asking other individuals who have done such work in the past.

The Chair: I quite agree with Mr. Shariff. I think that if the chair has some discretion in terms of the engagement of that person, it may well be that we could have somebody involved in preparing this orientation guide that's going to go out, but we wouldn't need them to be at all our meetings where we're discussing the minutiae of the various options for amendments and so on. At some point, when we have an idea of where we want to go with respect to the amendments, then we could re-engage that individual to help us draft the draft report. So there's certainly some flexibility there, I think, as well.

Any other comments before we put the motion of Mr. Shariff? Any discussion?

Ms Pastoor: Could I hear exactly how the motion was worded? I just wanted to make sure that the concept of RFP and open competition was involved. It was; it's just that I didn't hear it. What is it going to look like when it's written? Where is our writer?

Mr. Shariff: I just made the motion without having written it down, but the general concept was that the committee approve that we recruit a professional writer and approve a budget of up to \$20,000.

Ms Pastoor: Okay. In that recruiting is implicit that we would have it in some format of RFP, which, I understand, is within your purview to do.

Mr. Shariff: I would trust that the chair would undertake a process that would be ethical for an ethics review committee and that he would be prudent in the approval process.

Ms Pastoor: Thank you.

The Chair: Any other discussion?

Then I will call the question. All in favour of the motion by Mr. Shariff

to hire a contract writer with an expenditure of up to but not exceeding \$20,000?

Opposed? Can I see the people in favour again? Opposed? Okay. That's carried.

Do members have any other matters for discussion by the committee before we move on to discussing the date of the next meeting?

Mr. Shariff: Mr. Chairman, I would suggest that at every meeting we allocate about five or 10 minutes towards the end or towards the beginning for in camera discussion if we have any subject matters that we want to informally discuss before we bring it forward for general debate. If that's acceptable, I would suggest that beginning next meeting, we allocate five or 10 minutes just for in camera matters.

The Chair: Okay. We can proceed. We don't need to vote on that. The appropriate procedure would be to bring a motion to go in camera at the time that the meeting is convened or whatever. The chair will take note of that.

Are there any other items that members wish to raise at this point beginning our work?

Dr. B. Miller: I'm just trying to understand the process here. So the points that the Ethics Commissioner brought, you know, suggestions, the consultation document is going to incorporate issues that we raise?

The Chair: All issues, I would presume.

Dr. B. Miller: Okay. It's at the next meeting that we'll talk about that? We don't have to raise it now?

The Chair: No. That's correct.

Any other items for discussion?

We'll move on to the date of the next meeting. Now, I have tentatively set aside the morning of June 13 to consider the draft consultation guide. The following day, the morning of the 14th, is also available. I have checked with respect to conflicts. There is a meeting going on, but none of our people are involved in that.

12:00

Ms Pastoor: We have caucus on the 14th.

Mr. Shariff: What time would that caucus be over?

Ms Pastoor: It's all day, from 9 to 3, I think, on the 14th.

The Chair: That's preferable for you?

Ms Pastoor: No, no. That's our caucus. So the 13th is, I think, better for us. I can't speak for Dr. Miller.

The Chair: Anyone have difficulty with the morning of the 13th?

Mr. Shariff: I may have difficulty, but that's okay. I will try and make it, but I'm not sure at this stage.

Mr. Oberle: There is an SPC meeting on that day, the AMA SPC.

The Chair: Does that conflict with anyone on here?

Mr. Oberle: I don't know. While I was going to go, it's not necessary, but I think some of the members that aren't present here today are on the SPC.

Mr. Shariff: Is that in the evening?

Mr. Oberle: It's all day: 9 to 1:30 and then 2 to 7. It's an all-day thing.

Mr. Groeneveld, I believe, for starters.

The Chair: No. Mr. Groeneveld is on Justice.

Mr. Oberle: Oh, I'm sorry.

The Chair: We did check that.

So with that in mind, is the 13th, then, available to everyone here?

Mr. Oberle: I'll cancel this and attend, yeah.

Mr. Martin: What time?

The Chair: Well, the reason that I called the meeting for 10:30 today was to allow people in the south adequate time to drive up on the same day. If this is a convenient time, then I would suggest 10:30 on the 13th. Does that suit the members of the committee?

Ms Pastoor: Actually, Mr. Chair, as long as the municipal airport is open, I can be here by 8:30 in the morning.

Mr. Shariff: No. Let's stick with 10:30. Ten-thirty sounds good.

The Chair: Mrs. Sawchuk has pointed out that we may need up to three or four hours to prepare this orientation guide. We're building a document, I guess, by committee here, and it sometimes gets time-consuming as to what is going to go into that and what won't be in it. So perhaps a half hour earlier. Would that suit? At 10 a.m. on Monday the 13th? Okay. Then that's agreed.

Lunch is available for everyone in the committee room's foyer, and I guess I will accept a motion to adjourn at this point. Mr. Lukaszuk. All in favour? The committee is adjourned.

[The committee adjourned at 12:03 p.m.]