



Legislative Assembly of Alberta

The 27th Legislature
First Session

Standing Committee
on
Health

Wednesday, October 15, 2008
5:47 p.m.

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Standing Committee on Health

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Pastoor, Bridget Brennan, Lethbridge-East (L), Deputy Chair

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Fawcett, Kyle, Calgary-North Hill (PC)
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5:47 p.m.

Wednesday, October 15, 2008

[Mr. Horne in the chair]

The Chair: Good evening, colleagues. Welcome to this meeting of the Standing Committee on Health. Before we get to the agenda, I'd just like to for the record quickly ask both members and staff seated at the table to introduce themselves. Can we start with Mr. Olson?

Mr. Olson: Verlyn Olson, Wetaskiwin-Camrose.

Mr. Dallas: Cal Dallas, Red Deer-South.

Dr. Sherman: Raj Sherman, Edmonton-Meadowlark.

Ms Dean: Shannon Dean, Senior Parliamentary Counsel.

Ms LeBlanc: Stephanie LeBlanc, legal research officer, Legislative Assembly Office.

Ms Friesacher: Melanie Friesacher, communications consultant, Legislative Assembly Office.

Mr. Denis: I'm Jonathan Denis, MLA for Calgary-Egmont.

Ms Notley: Rachel Notley, MLA, Edmonton-Strathcona.

Mr. Fawcett: Kyle Fawcett, MLA, Calgary-North Hill.

Mr. Quest: Dave Quest, MLA, Strathcona.

Mrs. Dacyshyn: Corinne Dacyshyn, committee clerk.

Ms Norton: Erin Norton, committee clerk.

The Chair: I'm Fred Horne, MLA for Edmonton-Rutherford and your chair.

I should also note that we have regrets from the deputy chair, Ms Pastoor, and also Dr. Swann this evening. We also have staff joining us from the Department of Seniors and Community Supports and the office of the Public Trustee.

If we could turn to the agenda, I'll begin by asking for a motion to approve the agenda. Moved by Mr. Olson. Any discussion, additions, deletions? Those in favour? Opposed, if any? Carried. Thank you.

Item 3, adoption of the minutes from our meeting of October 9, 2008. Could I have a motion, please, to adopt the minutes? Mr. Dallas. Discussion? Any corrections, additions, deletions to the minutes? Seeing none, those in favour? Opposed, if any? That's carried. Thank you very much.

We turn, then, to item 4, the main item of our meeting this evening, review of the draft committee report on Bill 24. That was posted to the committee members' website in advance of the meeting. Before we get into the discussion, I'd just like to express thanks on behalf of the committee to all of the Legislative Assembly Office staff, in particular Ms LeBlanc for her efforts in turning this document over very quickly. As you know, we met just last week and completed our deliberations. We very much appreciate your effort, Stephanie, in getting this together for us.

What I propose to do is just sort of move through the document page by page. You'll notice it's divided into sections. These were the same sections that we considered at the last meeting in our deliberation phase. I'll just ask if members have any comments,

proposed changes on the draft as we move through it. I know that Mr. Olson has a point he'd like to raise, and Ms LeBlanc has identified a couple of clarification questions that we should address as well. Without anything further, then, I'd like to begin, if I could.

The first section is standard: introduction, order of reference. Those are just standard pieces that will appear at the beginning of any report like this from a policy field committee.

I'd like to begin, if I could, on page 5 with the recommendations. You'll note that the preamble here just indicates the committee's recommendation that the bill proceed. Then it moves into specific observations, opinions, and recommendations in accordance with what we discussed at the last meeting. If I could ask: on the first section, the termination of a supported decision-making order with reference to section 8, is there anything here that members would like to raise? No? Okay. Thank you. We can certainly come back to one of these sections if subsequent discussion brings something to mind.

Then the next section we've commented on is the termination of the guardianship order, section 17(4). Any comments on this section? Any concerns?

Seeing none, the next section is the public guardian's ability to apply for guardianship at 17 years of age. This references section 26 of the bill. Any comments or concerns here?

Mr. Dallas: Mr. Chairman, I just want to be sure that I'm interpreting this correctly. Essentially, the net result of this is that any reference to numerical age will be deleted from the act, then, and just replaced by the terminology "one year under the age of the majority." Do I understand that correctly?

The Chair: That's my understanding.
Ms Dean.

Ms Dean: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I believe the commentary on page 8 deals with the remaining sections that reference specific ages, so that would address your concerns.

The Chair: Thank you.
Do you see that, Mr. Dallas?

Mr. Dallas: Thank you.

The Chair: So that's the rationale. The report proceeds in the order in which the matters are laid out in the bill. We've got a couple like that where the rationale might appear a bit later.

Is that okay, then, Mr. Dallas?

Mr. Dallas: Yes.

The Chair: Anything further in this area?

Then we will move to page 6 of the draft and guardianship plans, section 33.

Ms Notley: It wasn't my sense that the significant majority thought of the committee was that we were looking at whether approval needed to be gotten for the change to the guardianship plan in any circumstance. I thought we were considering whether it was necessary in every circumstance – do you know what I mean? – but that we were never really thinking that there was merit to the idea of suggesting that under no circumstances would you ever have to have the plan approved. Is that clear what I'm saying, the difference between the two?

5:55

The Chair: I'm not sure that I'm quite clear. Would you mind repeating that?

Ms Notley: Okay. If you read it, the committee recommends that the minister revisit the process for making changes to the guardianship plan, including whether an application to the court is necessary in every circumstance. That reads differently and means a different thing from including whether an application to the court is necessary in any circumstance.

There was some talk about the potential minor change to a plan where it wouldn't seem to make sense that it go to a court – right? – and then there was talk about the review officer. I don't think that we were suggesting that, you know, never would there be a change to a plan that required court approval. I think that the use of "any" broadens it to suggest that that was what we were potentially thinking. That wasn't my take on it.

Is that clearer? Does that help a little bit?

The Chair: Yes. I see other members of the bar nodding their heads. I believe I understand what you're saying.

Other members of the committee, though, are you clear on the point?

Ms Notley: That was just my understanding.

Then, as well, I didn't separate out the notion of the review officer. I thought the idea was that the review officer was something that we would consider as an alternative, not as an option, with another alternative being nothing and that simply the plan is changed without approval. That was my take on it. Does that make sense, what I'm saying there?

The Chair: Yes.

Ms Notley: It wasn't everybody's thought, but I thought that the majority of the committee had sort of thought, basically, that in certain circumstances there might not be a need for the plan to be approved by the court, and in those cases we should consider some sort of reliance on a review officer system – that was sort of what we concluded – rather than considering that plus the possibility of never having to get approval for a plan in any situation. I don't think we broadened it to that discussion. Certainly, that wasn't what I was recommending we suggest that the minister consider.

The Chair: Okay. Thank you.
Other members on this point?

Mr. Dallas: Well, I'm just seeking clarity here because my recollection is a little different. My recollection was that you file a plan, that from time to time circumstances merit a change in plan. What we were really recommending is that the minister review the idea that certain types of changes to a plan most appropriately should go before the courts for some type of ratification but that the vast majority of modifications to a plan were modest in nature and didn't have a huge impact on the client. Those could be screened by a review officer with a very specific set of criteria. If that's what the essence of this says, then I believe I'm clear and on board with this.

Ms Notley: I think you said it better than I. That's what my sense was that we had agreed to, but I don't think that that's what it says there.

The Chair: Any other members on this point?

Mr. Denis: I agree with Ms Notley, actually.

The Chair: Okay. It would appear that we have a common understanding of what we intended to say. Does anyone want to suggest some wording changes here that would better reflect the common intention?

Mr. Dallas: Could we ask that a lawyer who doesn't have a vested interest in the outcome of this wording explain this to us, how this would be interpreted? Should we proceed with this wording? I guess that's my question. Do we need to reword this particular recommendation to reflect the consensus of the committee at the last meeting?

Mr. Olson: Just to add a little bit more context. I guess we could go back and look at the *Hansard* account. The way it's drafted in the bill now, sub (4) says "A guardian may, with the approval of the Court, amend a guardianship plan." We were talking about taking out "with the approval of the Court." I think the point was made that some felt that was kind of a blank cheque, so we were looking for a way of tempering that, hence the recommendation to the minister to kind of go back and revisit that. I actually didn't have a concern with the way it was written, but I take Ms Notley's point about, you know, every or any circumstance.

The Chair: Yeah. If I could suggest something. I'm assuming that we are in agreement in the main on the report. The motion that was suggested to me for the end would be that any small changes that need to be made to more accurately reflect the committee's intent could be left to the chair and the deputy chair to finalize prior to tabling the report. We could handle this in this way, realizing that we've got both Ms Dean and Ms LeBlanc listening to this as well. If you're comfortable with that – I think we agree on the substance. We'd like to explore, perhaps, some advice on wording that would more clearly convey our recommendation. We can handle it that way if that's all right. It would appear by the nonverbal indications that that would work. Ms Notley, does that address your concern? Okay.

The next section is termination of co decision-making order, section 33. Any discussion on that portion?

Okay. Seeing none, then the next section: definition of personal representative. Anything here? It appears not.

We're on page 7, then, at this point. The next section is the complaints process, section 76. Just on this one I'd like to ask Stephanie – there were a couple of points that you raised here that we should perhaps consider.

Ms LeBlanc: Thank you, Mr. Chair. With respect to this, the recommendations made regarding the complaints process, section 76, I just had a couple of questions about the recommendations that were made, the first being the recommendation the committee settled on about the response to the complaint being in writing. What I'm wondering is: does the committee want it to be in writing, or does the committee want there to be written reasons? There could be a difference there. If it's just in writing, there's a possibility that the complaints officer could respond: your complaint is denied. Period. If the committee wants that, then the recommendation in the report reflects that. But there was also some discussion about reasons, so that's why I raise that issue.

I'll just highlight the second issue. The second issue I noted was

that there was reference to the complaints officer providing reasons in writing, and a complaints officer would do that in circumstances where a complaint is dismissed without referral to an investigator. What I'm wondering is if an investigator, when he or she responds to a complaint after it's been referred, would also have to respond in writing. The notification requirement for an investigator is found in section 77(2). That provision also doesn't contain a writing requirement.

Those are my two questions.

The Chair: Just before we have discussion on this, does the department have any comment on these or any concerns from an operational standpoint? No? Okay. Thank you.

Any discussion? Both of these points struck me as particularly good catches. Mr. Dallas.

6:05

Mr. Dallas: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would suggest that references with respect to responding in writing would be applicable to both areas, a complaint officer and an investigator, and I don't think it's unreasonable to have an expectation that the reasons for the denial of an application be provided. My sense is that we could proceed on the basis that there would be some modest wordsmithing required to this as well.

The Chair: Would other members concur with that? Thank you.

Just for the record, then, the chair and the deputy chair, once we've passed an appropriate motion, would put in the additional language as required in those two bullets under section 76, complaints process.

Ms Notley: I think you're talking about the first bullet.

The Chair: Correct. Thank you. So the first bullet only.

We'll have to make reference in that bullet to the provision in the bill regarding the investigator as well. Agreed?

Hon. Members: Agreed.

The Chair: Thank you.

Next section, the selection of specific decision-maker.

Ms Notley: We haven't finished talking about section 76, though, the second bullet.

The Chair: Oh. My apologies. Further comments on this section?

Ms Notley: Without drawing this out, and I'm assuming that this won't draw it out, my suggestion is that this doesn't reflect fully what the committee – I can't agree to that recommendation as it is, and we talked about that before. I think we fully canvassed it, too. That being what it is, there is provision under the standing orders for minority reports, and my suggestion would be that I would just prepare a brief addendum as part of a minority on that issue. I won't go into it, but everyone knows the grounds because we've talked about it at some length already.

The Chair: Uh-huh. Yeah. Well, Standing Order 68 does provide for dissenting opinions. My understanding is that they are included as an appendix to the report, so they're filed as part of the full document. By all means, if you'd care to prepare that and submit it through the clerk, the deputy chair and I will ensure that that's included in the report.

Just in terms of timing I believe our report will be tabled the week of October 20, next week. There's been some discussion about the interpretation of the fourth week of October. The advice is that a strict interpretation is the week of October 20, perhaps leaning toward the last sitting day of that week. It sounds like it's going to be a relatively short piece in any case.

Can we move on, then, to the next section? Selection of specific decision-maker and regulatory authority, sections 88 and 115. Any comments on this section of the draft? Okay. Seeing none, I guess I'll move on to the next section.

We're at the bottom of page 7, overlap of co decision-making and guardianship orders. Any comments on this section? Seeing none, we'll move on to page 8.

Age of majority. This goes back to Mr. Dallas's earlier point. Any comments or concerns with respect to this piece?

Then the final section on page 8, further consultation with stakeholders. Any concerns or additions on this section?

Okay. That takes care of the material that was included in the draft report.

Mr. Olson has indicated to me that he has an additional point he'd like to raise with the committee.

Mr. Olson: Thank you, Mr. Chair. As I read through the report and tried to recall the discussion at the last meeting, it seemed to me that one thing that was missing was the difference of opinion, I being in the minority, about the issue of service on people. Right now the way the act reads, it says that a judge has the power or discretion to dispense with service if he or she is satisfied that it would be harmful to the person in question. I looked back at the *Hansard* account. I think that there was kind of an acknowledgement or a consensus that this was something that we weren't going to be unanimous on and that it would be appropriate to maybe state that in the report. So I just put together this wording as a tool to show you and tried to capture what I remember the discussion being, and I think that is supported by *Hansard*.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Olson. The clerk just distributed copies of some potential wording. Thank you, by the way, for the advance notice on this.

Any discussion on this point, then? Mr. Dallas.

Mr. Dallas: Mr. Chairman, thank you. I believe that this factually supports the discussion and consensus that was built and that it would be appropriate to include it in the report.

The Chair: Okay. Are we agreed? Thank you. I should say that this is something that I as the chair should have caught in the review of the draft as well. It certainly was discussed at the last meeting.

Any other comments on this? Thank you for the draft wording. Again, the deputy chair and I will ensure that that is included in the draft.

Are there other matters, other issues that people would like to raise with respect to the draft report? Well, it would appear, then, that we're agreed on the content.

I'd like to suggest and determine if a member of the committee would be willing to move the following: moved by a member that the Standing Committee on Health recommend that

Bill 24 proceed and approve the committee's report outlining the committee's observations, opinions, and recommendations with respect to Bill 24 and that the chair and deputy chair be authorized to work with committee staff to incorporate and approve the final changes made by the committee at the October 15, 2008, meeting.

Moved by Mr. Quest. Discussion?

Ms Notley: I'm just wondering if that can be amended just to reflect that there will be a dissenting opinion appended as well. Is that what it's called: a dissenting opinion? Look at me. Like I'm a judge, eh? A minority opinion.

Ms Dean: Just a minor point. I think the way we characterize these dissenting views is as separate reports. They're appended at the back of the report, but it's a separate report. The report of the committee is with respect to what the motion pertains to; the dissenting report is a separate item.

Ms Notley: Well, I guess the problem is that if it's considered a separate thing, then I can't vote for the actual majority one, which, you know, I'm happy to do with the recognition that there is an appendix of which people should be aware. I can't vote for the majority one otherwise because it's not clear that there is another opinion.

Ms Dean: So I take Ms Notley's point to be that she has a dissenting opinion on one point with respect to this bill.

The Chair: Just so I understand, Ms Notley. I mean, you can certainly be assured by the chair and the deputy chair that your report will be appended to the committee report and tabled in the Assembly. You need have no concern about that.

6:15

Ms Notley: My point is that simply by voting to recommend the way it's written right now without recognition of the fact that there is dissent, then in effect what I'm doing is voting in favour of a recommendation that I don't agree with, which currently exists in there. So either there is mention in the motion we're voting on that there is, in fact, a dissenting or a minority report appended, however you want to call it, and it's clear that it does not reflect everyone's opinion but will reflect mine, then I can vote for it. If it doesn't, then I can't. I'm not trying to be difficult, but I can't vote for a report and then technically write a separate report that conflicts, right?

The Chair: I respect your decision to support or not support the committee report as you wish, but if there's . . .

Ms Dean: Mr. Chair, thanks. I think we have to recognize that we're all in new territory here. If I can indulge the members of this committee, I'm just consulting the technical wording of that particular standing order, and it does say that members of the committee may provide dissenting or minority reports concerning the report or parts of it. So Ms Notley's desire to dissent with respect to part of the report is certainly in keeping with the spirit of what the standing order says. Pardon me for my interruption.

The Chair: Just before I go to Mr. Dallas, then, are you recommending that this be handled in any particular way?

Ms Dean: I believe that Ms Notley wants to vote in favour of the motion, just with recognition that she is not supporting the report in its entirety; she will be filing a dissenting report with respect to one element.

The Chair: Right. And I think that has been noted on the record a few times.

Mr. Dallas.

Mr. Dallas: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I just want to ask one more time

because in the addition that we've just built consensus on around dispensing with service of documents, we specifically have referenced, you know, the consensus of the majority of members. I know that we had that discussion at the prior meeting with respect to section 76(1)(a). If we could note there that we didn't build consensus of the committee, would that suffice?

Ms Notley: Well, I mean, it would be a question of writing that in, and then I'd have to write that as well and we couldn't vote on it. I thought about that as an option when I saw this, but then I thought that this actually gives us the ability to vote on this report. Then I can just avail myself of the standing order and, frankly, put a couple more sentences in for my reasoning behind it – not too many, just a couple – and still have it appended. I considered that option when I saw this addition, but I think it's probably better to go the other route. So we can amend this motion just to have it refer to this report plus dissenting ones, or we can just go ahead and not – that's fine – and I'll just vote against it, knowing on the record that I'm doing it just for that reason. It's not the end of the world. I typically vote against stuff, you know. I almost always vote against.

The Chair: My apologies. The report is the report of the committee. My preference would be to have the motion stand as it has been proposed. As chair, I'll certainly note for the record that Ms Notley will be providing a dissenting report on her own behalf with respect to the section that we identified. Then I have to leave it to you, Ms Notley, as to whether you feel you can vote for the motion on the committee report or not. So if I have agreement, then, I'm going to call the question. Those in favour of the motion? Those opposed? Ms Notley voted opposed to the motion. That's noted. The motion is carried. Thank you.

We have a few other items of business, but that does complete our review and report on Bill 24. Before we go on, I'd just like to thank the members again. I think we did some very good work and conducted a very thorough review of the bill, and I certainly appreciate your efforts. Also I'd like to thank the staff of the Legislative Assembly Office and the department staff that have stuck through this with us from the beginning, both from Seniors and Community Supports and the office of the Public Trustee. Your assistance to the committee is much appreciated. If you wish, feel free to depart at this point. Thank you.

Okay. If we could move to item 5, then, Tabling and Release of Committee's Final Report. I'm going to ask Melanie Friesacher, the communications consultant to the committee, to speak a bit about options available to us regarding the public release of the report. Melanie.

Ms Friesacher: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Essentially, the report can't be made public until it is tabled. I could produce a news release just essentially stating that the committee has completed their report after extensive review and public stakeholder input and then have that ready for when it is tabled. Then we would release that once it's tabled and post the report on the website.

The Chair: I probably should have said by way of introduction that in the past, in the brief history of these committees, I believe the practice was to have some kind of public notice at the time the bill was tabled, either a news release or a media advisory. Those options are available to us. None of them are compulsory, but they're available to us. Any comment on this? We're talking simply notification. I assume we're talking about notification that the report has been tabled; it is available to the public for their review. Would the committee be in favour, then?

Mr. Dallas: Would you require a motion, Mr. Chair?

The Chair: Apparently so. I don't think we have to, but I think it's in our interest to just put it on the record.

Mr. Dallas: I would then, at your pleasure, move that we prepare a communication to be released at the time of the tabling of the report to provide information with respect to the event of the tabling and the point of access where Albertans can review the material.

The Chair: Okay. Can I add just a friendly suggestion to that? I guess that I would like to make it clear that we're authorizing the chair and the deputy chair to work with staff on the media relations component. Would that be acceptable?

Mr. Dallas: Exactly what I meant to say, Mr. Chair.

The Chair: Any discussion on the motion? Those in favour? Opposed, if any? Thank you very much.

In addition to this, I'm going to suggest – I think it's a good idea – that we send a notification by e-mail to the people and organizations that made presentations to us in the course of the review. We'll just advise them that the report is available on the committee website once it has been tabled, just as a courtesy to those people who went to the trouble of writing in and the ones that appeared in person as well. Agreed?

Hon. Members: Agreed.

The Chair: Thank you.

Item 6 is Other Business. There's just one item that I have here, and that's the scheduling of upcoming meetings. What it comes down to – I know I deferred this at the last meeting – is that we have members available, not every member but most, on Monday, November 3, from 5:45 to 7:15; on Tuesday, November 18, from 8 until 11 a.m.; and on Monday, November 24, from 5:45 to 7:15. These will be the meetings where we will hear from groups that have requested to present to the committee on issues other than those referred by the Assembly. That will be the first purpose of these meetings.

The second purpose will be to have the Minister of Health and Wellness and acting chief medical officer attend to discuss public health issues, and that's in accordance with an earlier motion passed by the committee. There will be just enough time in these three meetings for all of that to occur.

6:25

An Hon. Member: Mr. Chair, can you just go over the dates again, please?

The Chair: Yeah. Your offices were canvassed on these. They are November 3 from 5:45 to 7:15 p.m., November 18 from 8 to 11 a.m., and November 24 from 5:45 to 7:15 p.m. So there are two evening periods, and there is one morning period.

This is just for planning purposes for the members. Okay? The chair is not anticipating that any formal decisions will be taken by the committee at this time. As we discussed earlier, we'll be hearing presentations, and we've allotted, similar to what we did on the bill, 15 minutes for a presentation and then 15 minutes for question and answer. I recognize that not all members are going to be able to attend all the meetings, so I'd encourage you to attend as much as you're able to. We'll of course make sure, too, that we have quorum.

I had hoped this evening to be able to indicate when the Minister of Health and Wellness and the acting chief medical officer would be here. Unfortunately, I wasn't able to confirm that for you this evening. It will be on one of these dates. We're going to speak just briefly after the meeting. I will make sure the committee is aware of the entire roster, so you'll know which groups are coming in which time slot. As well, you'll know when the minister and the acting chief medical officer are going to be here.

Ms Notley: I'm assuming when you talked about time limits and stuff, that was with respect to the presentations; that wasn't with respect to the minister and the acting chief medical officer.

The Chair: No. Approximately an hour will be available for the minister and the acting chief medical officer.

Ms Notley: Let's start with us having a discussion about that. First off, it seems like a rather limiting kind of thing for two very important people to be before the committee within an hour. I think that's kind of a substantive decision.

The Chair: The invitation has been extended for an hour period. If the committee wishes to make a decision to invite people at another time or to extend, that's entirely within the purview of the committee. At this point it's been scheduled that way, and we will proceed on that basis. If you wish to introduce a motion to make other arrangements, you can certainly do so.

Ms Notley: Well, yes. I mean, I've got some serious concerns about the invitation having gone out for two key people to be showing up here with the presumption that both of them and the issues could be properly addressed within an hour between the two of them. I think that that, in and of itself, is a very substantive decision that is very limiting and certainly doesn't reflect the conversation that we had prior to that motion going forward. I see that as a less than transparent effort to undercut a motion that had previously been passed by this committee.

I can't imagine how any kind of substantive discussion on these issues can be completed in half an hour each. If that's the expectation of the committee, that we have a genuinely full and transparent discussion, which was certainly what everyone suggested they were trying to do, then you can't do it within that time limit. I see this as a sort of after-the-fact attempt to shut down whatever evidence of openness people were trying to show before then.

The Chair: Well, Ms Notley, the chair notes and takes exception to your characterization of this. The motion which, of course, you proposed and was adopted by the committee – if you had some other interpretation, to the chair at least it appeared that we were asking the two to appear together to discuss public health issues. In fact, one challenge in the scheduling is to try to find a time slot when both gentlemen are available and can appear in front of the committee.

Ms Notley: I actually think that if you were to look at it, there's absolutely no discussion about them appearing together.

The Chair: I don't think you've introduced any such discussion before the committee before, but at this point I guess I'll go back to my earlier comment. If you'd care to propose a motion now to further direct arrangements regarding the appearance of these two officials, the minister and the official, please do so. Otherwise, I think we'll move on.

Ms Notley: Okay. Well, I will move, then, that the appearance of either of those officials not be limited to one hour and that the discussion continue for as long as necessary, as long as a normal period of time that the committee – okay, I’m doing this off the top of my head, so let me think about this. That they not need to appear together. There was never a part of the discussion or the amendment that occurred to my motion which – of course, we’re not actually following on my motion. It wasn’t part of that discussion that they appear together. I would simply move that

there not be a time limit imposed upon the appearance of either of those two parties before this committee.

I guess that’s the way I’ll put the motion.

The Chair: Any discussion on this?

Mr. Vandermeer: I would like to first test the waters and see if an hour is enough, and if it’s not, then we can always revisit that and say: can we meet again? Right? I mean, we could be going on and on and on. I think an hour would be sufficient.

The Chair: I’m not sure if there are other speakers.

I’m not sure what others’ understanding of the role of the chair would be. I think the role of the chair includes the responsible scheduling of committee business in accordance with the decisions that are made by the committee. Having no direction in either your original motion or the amending motion with respect to at least initially the amount of time that would be allocated in the agenda or the composition of the meeting, the chair took what I think is a fair interpretation to ensure as expeditious a movement as possible on the motion as it was amended. Beyond that I don’t think I have anything further to say on it.

Mr. Fawcett.

Mr. Fawcett: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I certainly would support your

comments in that I believe that some of these things should be left up to the discretion of the chair.

I also agree with Mr. Vandermeer’s comments that if there is something that comes out of the discussion within an hour, we might want to call back one or both of the individuals to have a further discussion on a specific topic. It’s one of those things where our time needs to be managed, needs to be focused when we’re in this committee. I sit on the Public Accounts Committee, and we have an hour and a half with each ministry to ask questions on the public accounts, and that’s not focused on a specific issue within a ministry. I think we need to be judicious in how we use our time and be effective. If there is something that is highlighted in our conversations within that hour, I certainly would be open to exploring any potential further meetings with those two individuals or any other individuals that we might want to call in front of this committee on that particular topic.

The Chair: Thank you.

Other speakers on this motion? Seeing none, I’m going to call the question. Those in favour? Opposed? The motion is defeated. Thank you.

Is there any other business?

The next meeting, then, will be on November 3 at 5:45 p.m. As I say, we’re just finalizing the invitations to the presenters, and we’re waiting on confirmation from the Minister of Health and Wellness and the acting chief medical officer. As soon as everything’s been confirmed, we’ll advise the committee of the order of business. So you’ll have some advance notice. I encourage you to think of your questions and come prepared, and we’ll make the most of the time that we have available with our guests on these dates.

If there’s nothing further, then, I’d ask for a motion to adjourn. Mr. Denis. Those in favour? Thank you very much.

[The committee adjourned at 6:35 p.m.]

