

Standing Committee on the Alberta Heritage Savings Trust Fund Act

10:04 a.m.

[Chairman: Mr. Dunford]

MR. CHAIRMAN: All right. If I could call the meeting to order, please. We want to indicate and hope that everyone is working from draft 6, dated January 26. There should be a total of 26 recommendations that we'll be dealing with this morning.

Any opening business before we get started on the voting?

MS HALEY: With regard to procedure, Mr. Chairman, I would like to withdraw one of the recommendations that I have made in here, number 25. I'm not sure on a procedural basis at what point I do that.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Well, let's just do it right now.

MS HALEY: Okay. I'd would like to withdraw it.

MR. CHAIRMAN: All right. Carol Haley is withdrawing number 25. Any discussion?

MR. WHITE: Mr. Chairman, the rules of order would say: with unanimous consent. So you just take a vote, and we'll all agree, just so that we make sure it doesn't mess up the records at all.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you for that. Do I have unanimous consent for the withdrawal of recommendation 25?

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Opposed? Hearing none, recommendation 25 is hereby withdrawn.

Any other items?

MS HALEY: Mr. Chairman, just with regard to clarification of how we're going to do this, are we going to have to read all of these, or can we just do them by number and go through them and vote?

MR. CHAIRMAN: I'm going to simply read the number and call the vote. I might indicate, though, that there was an agreement, I believe, last time that because of the similarities of recommendations 1 and 13, I would call number 1, then I would call number 13, and then we would revert to recommendation 2. That's my recollection.

MR. WHITE: Mr. Chairman, it might be easier if all items are moved, and items 3 and 13 are exempt to vote on individually. Anyone else that wants to vote differently on any other ones -- then all the other ones are moved, and we just deal with those two. I suspect that all of them are going to pass now that 25 is gone.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Well, that's very ambitious and courageous. I appreciate your guidance, but I'll decline.

Let's do it. Okay.

1. Moved by Dr. Percy:

Be it resolved that an all-party committee of the Legislative Assembly, such as the Standing Committee on the Alberta Heritage Savings Trust Fund Act, be designated to enter into negotiations with Vencap Equities Alberta Ltd. relative to

concluding an agreement respecting early repayment of the heritage savings trust fund loan.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Those in favour? Opposed? Defeated.

13. Moved by Mr. Herard:

Be it resolved that the Provincial Treasurer negotiate early repayment by Vencap Equities Alberta Ltd. of its outstanding loans.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Those in favour? Opposed? Carried.

2. Moved by Dr. Percy:

Be it resolved that the negotiations relative to repayment of the loan ensure to the fullest extent possible that the original mandate of Vencap Equities Alberta Ltd. in diversifying the Alberta economy be respected and maintained.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Those in favour? Opposed? Defeated.

3. Moved by Dr. Percy:

Be it resolved that the negotiations relative to repayment of the loan require that Vencap Equities Alberta Ltd. to the fullest extent possible retain its head office in Alberta.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Those in favour? Opposed? Defeated.

4. Moved by Dr. Percy:

Be it resolved that the Alberta heritage savings trust fund investment committee give consideration to the greater utilization of private investment managers located in Alberta to administer and manage the assets of the Alberta heritage savings trust fund.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Those in favour? Opposed?

DR. PERCY: Straight party lines, I see.

MR. CHAIRMAN: No, it's not. Just a second. Let's have a show of hands against. Defeated.

5. Moved by Dr. Percy:

Be it resolved that the Alberta heritage savings trust fund annual report provide comparative information regarding the rate of performance of those assets managed by government investment managers versus those assets that are managed on behalf of the government by private-sector investment managers and also compared to performance of funds of similar assets managed by the private sector.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Those in favour? Those opposed? Carried. Oh, I'm sorry. Everyone has to vote. So I may have allowed some people not to raise their hand. Let's do this again. Those in favour? Carried unanimously.

6. Moved by Dr. Percy:

Be it resolved that the Alberta heritage savings trust fund annual report provide a breakdown of all the income that arises from the use of securities lending operations by investment dealers and that each dealer engaged in such transactions be identified.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Those in favour? Opposed? Defeated. No. Just a second. Let's do that one again. Those in favour?

MR. SOHAL: Which number is that, sir?

MR. CHAIRMAN: We're on number 6. Okay? So we have six. Those opposed? Six. We have a tie vote.

MR. WHITE: What's your vote?

MR. CHAIRMAN: I have to read it now; don't I? Yeah, I'll agree to that one. So that's carried.

7. Moved by Mr. Herard:

Be it resolved that the scope of the pending public review of the heritage savings trust fund include a review of the mandate of the Standing Committee on the Alberta Heritage Savings Trust Fund Act.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Those in favour? Okay. Those opposed? I haven't seen all the hands yet.

MS HALEY: Sorry. I was in favour of it, Mr. Chairman. You're just so quick. I had to read it first.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Anyone opposed? Is anyone opposed to number 7? All right. Carried unanimously.

Heather, I'm having a little trouble seeing your hand at times; okay?

MRS. FORSYTH: It's been up and down.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Yeah, I know.

8. Moved by Mr. Mitchell:

Be it resolved that the Alberta heritage savings trust fund committee encourage the Health minister to investigate the prevalence of asthma in locations throughout Alberta through the use of funding available for research from the heritage savings trust fund.

MR. CHAIRMAN: In favour? Opposed? Defeated.

9. Moved by Mr. Mitchell:

Be it resolved that the Alberta heritage savings trust fund committee encourage the Minister of Health to investigate the efficacy of chelation therapy as a treatment for atherosclerosis through the use of funding available for medical research from the heritage savings trust fund by, among other initiatives, assessing and evaluating existing research in this area.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Those in favour? Okay. Against? Carried.

10. Moved by Mr. Mitchell:

Be it resolved that the Alberta heritage savings trust fund committee encourage the Minister of Health to review the effect of mental health programs currently available in reducing the need for hospitalization through the use of funding available for medical research from the Alberta heritage savings trust fund.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Those in favour? Against? Defeated.

11. Moved by Dr. Massey:

Be it resolved that an independent advisory committee be appointed by the Standing Committee on the Alberta Heritage Savings Trust Fund Act to determine how the Alberta heritage

savings trust fund could be best used to stimulate job growth in high areas of unemployment in Alberta.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Those in favour? Opposed? Defeated.

12. Moved by Mr. Herard:

Be it resolved that all government departments responsible for heritage savings trust fund loans of all types consider getting out of the direct loan business by using commercial lenders as the loan vehicle and strive to get out of the direct loan business.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Those in favour? Against? That's carried. Recommendation 13 we carried.

14. Moved by Dr. Percy on behalf of Mr. Chadi:

Be it resolved that some members, comprising members from both parties, of the Standing Committee on the Alberta Heritage Savings Trust Fund Act be designated by the Provincial Treasurer to participate in the public review of the Alberta heritage savings trust fund to ascertain whether the fund's assets are being used in the most effective manner in relation to the province's fiscal objectives.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Those in favour? Opposed? Defeated. Number 15 was withdrawn. Number 16 was withdrawn.

MRS. FORSYTH: Excuse me, Mr. Chairman.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Yes, Heather.

MRS. FORSYTH: I may be a little slow, but can we just slow down a little bit?

MR. CHAIRMAN: Oh, okay.

Now, number 15 was withdrawn. Number 16 was withdrawn.

17. Moved by Mr. White:

Be it resolved that the Standing Committee on the Alberta Heritage Savings Trust Fund Act be designated to assess whether investment managers have achieved performance targets and benchmarks set out in the three-year business plan by requiring that the person responsible for the investment managers appear before the committee to account for the Alberta heritage savings trust fund performance.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Those in favour? Those opposed? Defeated.

18. Moved by Dr. Percy on behalf of Mr. Dalla-Longa:

Be it resolved that the Provincial Treasurer undertake to provide the Standing Committee on the Alberta Heritage Savings Trust Fund Act, five days prior to his appearance before the committee, a comprehensive breakdown of holdings in the Alberta heritage savings trust fund commercial investment division, detailing number of shares held in each investment, the price per share, the book value of each investment, and the accrued interest earned.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Those in favour? Okay. Against? That is carried. I don't want to hear any more talk about free votes from you four guys.

19. Moved by Mr. White on behalf of Mr. Mitchell:

Be it resolved that the annual report of the Alberta heritage savings trust fund provide a detailed explanation of the

assumptions underlying the determination of market values for provincial Crown corporations -- the Alberta Agricultural Development Corporation, the Alberta Mortgage and Housing Corporation, the Alberta Municipal Financing Corporation, and the Alberta Opportunity Company -- found within the Alberta investment division.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Those in favour? Those opposed? Defeated.

20. Moved by Dr. Massey on behalf of Mr. Dalla-Longa:
Be it resolved that the annual report of the Alberta heritage savings trust fund provide a more detailed schedule of administrative expenses as found within note 4 of the financial statements, specifying the fees, wages, salaries, expenses, or other payments incurred in connection with the administration of the fund.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Those in favour? Those opposed? Defeated.

21. Moved by Dr. Massey:
Be it resolved that the public review of the Alberta heritage savings trust fund have as one of its terms of reference a comprehensive assessment of the level of administrative costs which are incurred at every level of the fund, including projects and programs undertaken by investment entities held within the fund.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Those in favour? Those opposed? Defeated.

22. Moved by Dr. Percy on behalf of Mr. Mitchell:
Be it resolved that notwithstanding the other recommendations which have been advanced by the Standing Committee on the Alberta Heritage Savings Trust Fund Act the assets of the fund be liquidated in an orderly fashion, with the proceeds received from liquidation of assets to be applied directly against the unmatured debt.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Those in favour? Those opposed? Defeated.

23. Moved by Mr. Doerksen:
Be it resolved that the Alberta heritage savings trust fund committee encourage the Minister of Labour to eliminate the amount of grants available from the Alberta occupational health and safety heritage grant program and to fund these worthwhile projects from within the existing department budget.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Those in favour? Those opposed? Defeated.

24. Moved by Mr. Doerksen:
Be it resolved that the Alberta Heritage Foundation for Medical Research include in its annual report or other suitable vehicle a summary outlining the ethical considerations in the research projects it is funding. The summary should include the process used to determine how ethical decisions are reached.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Those in favour? Those opposed? Carried.
Number 25 has been withdrawn.

26. Moved by Mr. White:
Be it resolved that the Premier proceed with holding a review of the Alberta heritage savings trust fund.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Those in favour? Those opposed? Carried.

Okay. We will now get this into a first draft of a report. As soon as that is ready, we will then advise all the committee members and schedule a meeting to finalize the report. Our deadline, of course, is February 25 for the tabling of our report.

I want to thank you once again for your co-operation and have a great day. [interjection] Oh, sorry.

MR. WHITE: Are you able to set that meeting now?

MR. CHAIRMAN: I'm not.

MR. WHITE: No?

MR. CHAIRMAN: You might want to advise me of some bad days.

MR. WHITE: Michael will. He's sort of the lead on this one.

MR. MITCHELL: February 25 you said?

MR. CHAIRMAN: Yup. We have 15 days.

All righty. I'll look for a motion to adjourn. All those in favour? Thank you.

[The committee adjourned at 10:14 a.m.]

