

12:48 p.m.

[Mr. Langevin in the chair]

THE CHAIRMAN: I'll call the meeting to order. It's past 12:45. I want to thank you all for coming on a busy day like this during session.

We have a short agenda today, and we will start with the first item on the agenda, the approval of the agenda for this meeting.

MS BARRETT: So moved.

THE CHAIRMAN: So moved by Pam. Agreed?

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

THE CHAIRMAN: Carried. Thank you very much.

Now, the approval of minutes. We have two sets of minutes previously that we had not approved, and they should have both been in your package that you received from Diane. I had a look at both of them, and I did not notice any problems, but I'll ask if there are any omissions or errors in the minutes. Let's start with the December 16, 1997, minutes.

MR. JACQUES: Well, I would move acceptance of the minutes.

THE CHAIRMAN: We have a motion to accept the minutes of December 16. All those in favour of that motion?

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

THE CHAIRMAN: Opposed? The motion is carried.

Now we'll move on to the February 24 minutes, and again, you have a copy. Any errors or omissions?

MS BARRETT: Not that I can see.

MRS. O'NEILL: This is the December 16 one; isn't it?

MS BARRETT: No, we're on February now. That was the financial adjustments one.

MRS. O'NEILL: Okay. Yes, yes. Well, then I do remember, and nothing jumped out. So moved.

THE CHAIRMAN: Okay. Moved by Mary that we accept the minutes of February 24. All those in favour of that motion?

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

THE CHAIRMAN: Opposed? The motion is carried.

Now, item 4 is the real reason why we convened this meeting today. As you know, Derm Whelan has left the office of Chief Electoral Officer, and Mr. Brian Fjeldheim has assumed the responsibility of acting until such time as we appoint a new officer. We have to review the pay and make allowance for acting pay for that time period when he will be acting. So I'll open that up for discussion.

MR. JACQUES: Mr. Chairman, I would like to move a motion that the committee approve a salary adjustment in the amount of \$600 per month to Mr. Brian Fjeldheim for serving as Acting Chief Electoral Officer from March 12, 1998, to the day prior to the date

on which the Chief Electoral Officer assumes office.

Speaking to the motion, Mr. Chairman. From my understanding a period of 45 days has to go by until such time that a person is eligible for any differential pay, and once that point in time is reached, then it's retroactive to the date that they assumed the position of Acting Chief Electoral Officer. Mr. Fjeldheim's current salary is \$69,376, and we have been advised that in the past, acting pay generally ranged between 8 and 12 percent of the incumbent's current salary. In this particular case, the amount that I'm recommending, \$7,200, is approximately 10 and a half percent of his salary.

MS BARRETT: I just have one question, Mr. Chairman. What was the salary – I've been looking through this, and I can't find it – going to the Chief Electoral Officer until he left his post?

THE CHAIRMAN: The annual salary was \$80,000 a year plus the benefits that the Chief Electoral Officer has, like a car and other items, which Brian will not be getting. He's just acting, and the only adjustment we're making is the acting pay.

MS BARRETT: Okay. Well, if this is the standard kind of offer that's made to people in acting positions, within that range of 8 to 12 percent, I think that this is perfectly reasonable.

MRS. O'NEILL: I agree.

THE CHAIRMAN: Any further discussion?

MRS. O'NEILL: You said it was 10 percent?

THE CHAIRMAN: Roughly 10 and a half percent.

If there's no further discussion, I'll ask for a vote. All those in favour of the motion?

HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

THE CHAIRMAN: Those opposed? The motion is carried unanimously. Thank you very much for that support.

Now Other Business, item 5. Is there any other business that is urgent, that should be brought up today? As you realize, we don't have much time today because we have to go to session.

MRS. O'NEILL: I just wanted to ask you if you could update us on the search.

THE CHAIRMAN: Yes. The advertisement went out in the Alberta press the week after Easter.

MRS. SHUMYLA: Yes. It was in the newspapers last weekend with a closing date of May 15, and I've already got some applications.

MR. DICKSON: Mr. Chairman, I'm curious. Has a consultant been hired for this, or is it being done sort of in-house?

THE CHAIRMAN: No. The search committee decided to do the same as we did when we hired the Ombudsman, to do it in-house with our support staff and with Alayne Stewart from personnel administration. We basically used the same papers to advertise, plus the Internet. We used the same procedures, and I understand from Diane that she's got 15 to 20 applications in already, so I think it's going to work out fine. That's just an update.

MS BARRETT: Mr. Chairman, I'd like to clarify something. I'm pretty sure I'm right about this. At any time after the staff do the initial screening, anybody from the committee who wants to look at any of the applications can; is that correct?

MRS. SHUMYLA: From the search committee?

MS BARRETT: Yeah.

MRS. SHUMYLA: Yes.

MS BARRETT: That's what I thought.

MRS. SHUMYLA: In fact, at the next search committee meeting all the applications will be brought to the meeting.

MS BARRETT: I like democracy, but we don't have to push it.

THE CHAIRMAN: What we did last time, when Mary and Howard and Yvonne, I believe, were on the committee: the staff sorted them out into A, B, and C. They made a binder for all the committee members, if you had any questions or you wanted to review. If you were satisfied with that, you could just turn the binder back in. We make provision that it doesn't become public knowledge because of confidentiality, so the binders are returned.

MS BARRETT: That's all I needed for clarification. Thank you.

THE CHAIRMAN: Any further questions?

MRS. FRITZ: I have questions on a different topic, Mr. Chairman. What is the process for our committee if there's a by-election called fairly soon or within six months or whatever? Are we involved in any way as a committee now that we have this acting person?

THE CHAIRMAN: No. Our mandate is not to get involved in that at all. As long as we have an acting person, he will carry out the duties as if he were the Chief Electoral Officer. The same work will proceed, and the office will act in the same way.

MRS. FRITZ: Okay. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

MRS. O'NEILL: Just a further one. I'm assuming that he was an assistant; was he?

THE CHAIRMAN: He was the second person in that office.

MRS. O'NEILL: I'm assuming there's someone going to be an assistant to him.

THE CHAIRMAN: I had discussed that with him, and my estimation is that the whole process should not take more than four or five months. It's not going to take a year like the last time, hopefully. He thinks he can handle it for that interim, because there won't be a general election.

MRS. O'NEILL: So he has enough support for the work he needs to do.

THE CHAIRMAN: He didn't indicate to me that he saw any problem with that at all.

Okay. We don't have a date for the next meeting, so Diane will do that communication when we need to call a meeting.

So I would accept a motion to adjourn the meeting.

MS BARRETT: So moved.

THE CHAIRMAN: Moved by Pam that we adjourn. Agreed? Thank you all for coming.

[The committee adjourned at 12:57 p.m.]