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**Official Report
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(Hansard)**

Wednesday 22 February 2017

**Journal
des débats
(Hansard)**

Mercredi 22 février 2017

**Standing Committee on
the Legislative Assembly**

Organization

**Comité permanent de
l'Assemblée législative**

Organisation

Chair: Monte McNaughton
Clerk: Trevor Day

Président : Monte McNaughton
Greffier : Trevor Day

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

STANDING COMMITTEE ON
THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLYCOMITÉ PERMANENT DE
L'ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE

Wednesday 22 February 2017

Mercredi 22 février 2017

The committee met at 1303 in committee room 1.

ELECTION OF VICE-CHAIR

The Chair (Mr. Monte McNaughton): Good afternoon, everyone. Welcome back to the Standing Committee on the Legislative Assembly. I just wanted to take a few seconds to welcome the new members to the committee. We have Joe Dickson, Harinder Malhi—who's not here today; Cristina may be coming in to sub—and, of course, Laurie Scott. Welcome to the committee. Some of you may have been on the committee before.

The first order of business today is to elect a Vice-Chair. I'll take a motion. Mr. Bailey?

Mr. Robert Bailey: Mr. Chair, I would move that Laurie Scott be appointed Vice-Chair of the committee.

The Chair (Mr. Monte McNaughton): Excellent. All in favour? Any debate? Carried.

Mr. Robert Bailey: Speech.

Mr. Michael Mantha: I would like to hear her acceptance speech.

Ms. Laurie Scott: It's too late.

APPOINTMENT OF SUBCOMMITTEE

The Chair (Mr. Monte McNaughton): We'll move now. Everyone has a—

Interjection.

The Chair (Mr. Monte McNaughton): I'm sorry. We have a subcommittee motion?

Mr. Robert Bailey: Yes, Mr. Chair. I'd like to move that Laurie Scott replace Steve Clark on the subcommittee on committee business.

The Chair (Mr. Monte McNaughton): Any debate? All in favour? Carried.

ASSIGNMENT OF MINISTRIES

The Chair (Mr. Monte McNaughton): Everyone has in front of them the draft committee report, pursuant to standing order 111(b). If there is any debate or any questions on this—other than that, we would like someone to adopt it. Ms. Wong?

Ms. Soo Wong: Yes, I can move it.

The Chair (Mr. Monte McNaughton): Move adoption of the report?

Ms. Soo Wong: Yes.

The Chair (Mr. Monte McNaughton): All agreed? Carried.

PETITIONS

The Chair (Mr. Monte McNaughton): Now we'll go to a topic that we've worked on for quite a while: consideration of the report of the E-Petitions Working Group. If I could, I'd like to turn it over to our new Clerk, Will, to give an update on where we're at. Everyone has in front of them the letter that was sent to me with an update.

The Clerk of the Committee (Mr. William Short): Good afternoon, everybody. Just a brief update on this: Since you guys received the e-petitions report from the working group at the Legislative Assembly, we have an update that the Clerk has sent to the Chair of the committee with some numbers on the proposal that we recommended at the Legislative Assembly in that report. So you all have the working group report in front of you, along with that update from the Clerk.

Yes, Ms. Wong?

Ms. Soo Wong: I was going to ask a question after you speak. That's all.

The Clerk of the Committee (Mr. William Short): Okay.

At this point in time, really, it's up to the committee how you want to proceed with the information that you have in front of you. Basically, the next steps would be whether or not the committee is in favour of going forward with e-petitions. Then, after that, there would be a number of items that we would need; for example, an amendment to the standing orders under standing order 39, an insertion under "Petitions" for e-petitions, and then obviously going to the Board of Internal Economy for approval of funding that is necessary for the project if it is agreed to go forward with the project.

I'll open it up to you guys for any discussion or questions that you might have.

The Chair (Mr. Monte McNaughton): Ms. Wong?

Ms. Soo Wong: Thank you very much, Mr. Chair. I guess when you live long enough in a committee, you know the historical context of this particular item. Given that we have a couple of new members of the committee, Mr. Chair, I think it's appropriate for us—the previous Deputy Clerk wrote to this committee on October 21,

2016. In his last statement in his letter, he said, “I would be pleased to meet with the committee at its convenience to discuss the working group recommendations.”

Given that there are new members, I’d like to move that the Clerk come back with a report to the committee next week so that we can get an update. We had a big discussion in the past on the cost—it was a big issue; I remember that—the whole staffing piece, as well as some logistics in terms of steps and process. I don’t think we should belabour this discussion too long, because we have been at this, folks, for over two years. So either we move forward, tell the staff some directions, or shut it down, because it’s not good, using taxpayers’ dollars to keep meeting on a topic that’s over two years old.

That’s my motion, and I hope the committee will consider it. Have the staff come back next week. Have the researcher and the Clerk come back with an update as to where we go from here. We’ve got to discuss that.

The Chair (Mr. Monte McNaughton): And invite the Clerk to present and take questions.

Ms. Soo Wong: Yes, absolutely. The Clerk and the researcher, absolutely, because we need the updates.

The Chair (Mr. Monte McNaughton): We have a motion on the floor. Any further debate?

Mr. Joe Dickson: As the new old-timer, rather than the new kid, I just want to make sure that’s just an overview of the e-petitions that you’re referencing, and then we’d come back either March 1 or March 8?

The Clerk of the Committee (Mr. William Short): Yes.

The Chair (Mr. Monte McNaughton): Sure. Whatever the will of the committee is, sure.

Mr. Joe Dickson: Thank you.

Interjections.

Ms. Soo Wong: The first.

The Chair (Mr. Monte McNaughton): March 1 works. Ms. Scott?

Ms. Laurie Scott: I would second what Ms. Wong said. It’s pretty new to the members here, and although it has been discussed on and off for two years, I would like

time and a briefing before we make any final acceptance or votes. So thank you for doing that, Ms. Wong.

The Chair (Mr. Monte McNaughton): Mr. Mantha?

Mr. Michael Mantha: I agree with all the discussions that have come around the table. This may potentially become a crucial tool for Ontarians to use, and we might as well do it right, make sure that all our ducks are lined up and that the tool is actually put out there effectively and that the new members who are around the table are familiar with the history of what has brought us here. A lot of that can happen outside of this room as far as getting familiar, but the Clerk coming back with their findings and their report I think will essentially expedite the process about bringing this forward and bringing this new tool to Ontarians.

The Chair (Mr. Monte McNaughton): Ms. Wong and committee, are there any others that we should be inviting, like IT people?

Ms. Soo Wong: I just want to open it up and let the staff, the Clerk and for sure the researcher, because they did a report for the committee—any type of updates in terms of implementation and procedurally. Right? Because much of this has been talk, talk, talk. Right now, at this stage, besides making a hard decision—how much is it going to cost in terms of fiscal budget costs?—there’s also the implementation, because in the previous report we heard what the House of Commons has done, and other jurisdictions. Procedurally, we also need to know: If this committee made a decision this spring and then brought it back to the House, how long would it take to implement? I don’t know. So we might need IT or whoever the Clerk sees fit to bring to the committee to give us some historical context, but also the implementation steps and procedures are really important for the committee to know.

The Chair (Mr. Monte McNaughton): Okay. So we have a motion. Are the members all in favour? Great. Carried.

Any other business? No? We’re adjourned.

The committee adjourned at 1311.

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