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of Ontario



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M-6

**Standing Committee on
the Legislative Assembly**

**Comité permanent de
l'Assemblée législative**

1st Session
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Wednesday 27 February 2019

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Mercredi 27 février 2019

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Clerk: Valerie Quioc Lim

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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 27 February 2019

Mercredi 27 février 2019

The committee met at 1304 in committee room 1.

TELEVISION BROADCAST SYSTEM

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Vijay Thanigasalam): Good afternoon, everyone. The Standing Committee on the Legislative Assembly will now come to order.

In our last meeting, the committee was provided with recommendations on how to update the assembly's television guidelines, and recommendations on how to improve the television broadcast system. We have also distributed budget numbers on the suggested improvements.

This committee can discuss on how to proceed. The committee can take the updated television guidelines, and some or all of the suggested improvements, and report them to the House. If so, our table research clerk can draft a report that the committee can consider at another meeting. You can also ask for more information from research or from the director of broadcast.

Any discussion or debate? Mr. Coe.

Mr. Lorne Coe: On the breakdown that was provided by staff, I need some clarification in terms of the numbers that they have provided. They tend to have budget numbers for the television broadcast system recommended improvements. It's unclear as I read the breakdown, Chair, where the additional money that's reflected here would be coming from. The author of the budget—where are they looking to get this money from?

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Vijay Thanigasalam): So, do—

Mr. Lorne Coe: Can you move your microphone closer, please? Thank you.

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Vijay Thanigasalam): Okay. So, do we ask for more details on the budget, Mr. Coe?

Mr. Lorne Coe: I'm sorry?

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Vijay Thanigasalam): Do we ask for more details on this budget? More details?

Mr. Lorne Coe: I think we need to, from a couple of perspectives. As I read through it, there are a number of options, and one is as high as three quarters of a million dollars. I think part of the committee's due diligence is to understand what the author of this budget—where he or she would be looking for the money to come from. For example, if it's coming from the civil service, there's an ongoing budgeting process, or if it's looking for money from the government, there's an established process through Treasury Board, as all committee members know.

I would suggest, Chair, through you, that until we have this information, we defer considering this item because we need—this is a critical piece of information that we do not have at this time.

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Vijay Thanigasalam): The director of broadcast gave how much money it would cost for this breakdown of it. It's either this committee approves and it has to go through the House to make the addition. He didn't mention anything about where the money comes from, the allocation, because that's totally not from his part. It's up to the process.

Mr. Lorne Coe: I understand the distinction, and I think it's apparent to all members, as you read the material, but I would stress that our due diligence is to satisfy ourselves of where that source of funding would originate and what the implications would be.

My suggestion, Chair, once again, is that any consideration of this particular breakdown, as it is, be deferred until we have the benefit of the supplementary information I requested.

I would add to that, through you, Chair, that the author of this material, who last appeared before the committee, be here and available to answer questions from committee members, that I would anticipate would be substantive as I review this, as well as the guidelines and any other supplementary material to that. That's the position of the government.

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Vijay Thanigasalam): Thank you, Mr. Coe. Mr. Harris and then Mr. Hassan.

Mr. Mike Harris: Madam Clerk, maybe you could dig into that a little bit more for us and find out exactly where the different streams would be while we re-evaluate and speak with Michael hopefully next time we have a committee meeting here.

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Vijay Thanigasalam): Mr. Hassan.

Mr. Faisal Hassan: My understanding is that that decision—isn't it for the Board of Internal Economy to decide, not this committee?

1310

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Vijay Thanigasalam): That's right, Mr. Hassan. If the committee wants to move forward with this budget, then it is internal economy who makes the decision.

So can we invite Michael for the upcoming meeting, just to answer questions in a detailed manner? Do we agree on inviting Michael to the meeting? Agreed.

Mr. Oosterhoff?

Mr. Sam Oosterhoff: I was just agreeing.

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Vijay Thanigasalam): Okay. Mr. Coe?

Mr. Lorne Coe: Chair, through you, and through the Clerk of the Committee, it would be helpful to all the committee members that in the invitation to the person who authored the budget numbers and the guidelines—that before they appear, they understand some of the background to the questions that we've already posed here so that they come equipped to answer the original questions from this meeting and, in particular, where the money is going to come from and where they're looking for sources. All right? Because the guidelines are influenced by decisions that might arise in light of our consideration of the budget, but we do not have enough information before us today to consider this budget.

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Vijay Thanigasalam): Mr. Harris?

Mr. Mike Harris: I think it's fine if the final approval has to come from the Board of Internal Economy. That's fine, but before it can go there, we need to know what stream that money is coming from so that we can make sure that we provide the relevant report to the Board of Internal Economy. I think that's what the key part of this take-away is.

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Vijay Thanigasalam): Thank you, Mr. Harris.

Does the committee want to discuss the further guidelines or do you want to defer that to the upcoming meeting?

Mr. Lorne Coe: I'll give you a motion to defer, or refer back, this particular report from the author within the parameters that I established earlier in the committee meeting, and with the addition that my colleague MPP Harris just added. Thank you.

Mr. Mike Harris: Sorry. Are we speaking of these guidelines?

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Vijay Thanigasalam): Those guidelines, yes.

Mr. Oosterhoff?

Mr. Sam Oosterhoff: I did have one question—sorry? *Interjection.*

Mr. Sam Oosterhoff: Actually, yes, so I guess I have two questions. First, on page 4, it says, under section 5(iv), that closed captioning is needed on the Web by 2020. Is this because of the AODA? Is that the reasoning? So that needs to proceed anyway, right? Because if the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act says that we need to have the proceedings of the Legislature online with closed captioning, we have to proceed with that as it is. Right? That's a timeline that has been put in place. I'm just curious about how that works.

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Vijay Thanigasalam): Right. I believe that we can highlight that particular section with the director when he comes.

Mr. Sam Oosterhoff: Okay. I'll defer that off to when he appears again, but when he comes in, I'd like some—

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Vijay Thanigasalam): Okay. Mr. Oosterhoff has asked that we defer the guidelines. Does the committee agree to defer? Agreed.

Mr. Sam Oosterhoff: And then I had one other question still, but that was not related to this, so I'm not sure if it has to get moved—like for the television guidelines.

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Vijay Thanigasalam): Yes, sure.

TECHNOLOGY IN THE CHAMBER

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Vijay Thanigasalam): Mr. Harris?

Mr. Mike Harris: I have something that I'd like to bring to the attention of the committee, and I don't know if it would be this committee that deals with it or not, but there are current stipulations within the House that you're not allowed to read from digital devices, like a tablet, an iPad or your phone etc.

I was wondering if that would be something we might be able to visit as a committee or whether or not that needs to be looked at through a different function. I think that modernizing things is certainly something we should be looking toward. Any time that you don't have to print off 15 or 20 pieces of paper for debate or speech etc. is something that would be great.

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Vijay Thanigasalam): Table research can speak a little bit on that.

Ms. Joanne McNair: In the previous Parliament, this committee had been asked by the Speaker to—we don't actually have guidelines for the use of technology in the chamber. We've sort of done it ad hoc. The Speaker has made rulings like how your phones have to be on silent and that kind of thing.

The Speaker had asked the committee to review what had been previously done way back when, when people still had pagers and stuff. That was done, a draft report was written, and then it was just shelved. That was part of it. It would be very easy for me to dig up that report, since I wrote it, and I could bring it forward at some point.

Mr. Mike Harris: That would be great. Please and thank you.

Chair, just to clarify: It would be the responsibility of our committee to put something like that forward?

Ms. Joanne McNair: Yes.

Mr. Mike Harris: Okay.

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Vijay Thanigasalam): Does the committee agree to bring that report to this committee? Agreed.

Any further business? If not, we can adjourn.

The committee adjourned at 1317.

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