



MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS

OTTAWA, Thursday, February 16, 2023
(19)

[English]

The Standing Committee on Internal Economy, Budgets and Administration met in camera and then proceeded in public, this day at 9:00 a.m., in room C128, Senate of Canada Building, the chair, the Honourable Lucie Moncion, presiding.

Members of the committee present: The Honourable Senators Bovey, Boyer, Carignan, P.C., Dalphond, Deacon (*Ontario*), Dean, Gagné, Loffreda, Marshall, Moncion, Moodie, Patterson (*Ontario*), Plett, Saint-Germain, Seidman and Tannas (16).

Other senator present: The Honourable Senator Cardozo (1).

Participating in the meeting: Pascale Legault, Chief Corporate Services Officer and Clerk of the Standing Committee on Internal Economy, Budgets and Administration; Gérald Lafrenière, Interim Clerk of the Senate and Clerk of the Parliaments and Chief Legislative Services Officer; Philippe Hallée, Law Clerk and Parliamentary Counsel; senior Senate officials and other support staff.

WITNESSES:

The Honourable Senator Elizabeth Marshall, Deputy Chair, Subcommittee on the Senate Estimates and Committee Budgets;

Toni Francis, Chief Human Resources Officer, Human Resources Directorate;

Chasse Helbin, Officer, Administrative, Ceremonial and Protocol and Mace Bearer, Office of the Usher of the Black Rod;

Pierre Lanctôt, Chief Financial Officer, Finance and Procurement Directorate;

Greg Peters, Usher of the Black Rod, Office of the Black Rod;

Marie-Jules Morris Bourguin, Senior Advisor, Business Planning, Information Services Directorate;

Ronald Prud'homme, Senior Advisor, Planning and Performance Measurement, Finance and Procurement Directorate;

David Vatcher, Director, Information Services Directorate.

Pursuant to rule 12-7(1) of the *Rules of the Senate*, the committee continued its consideration of financial and administrative matters concerning the Senate's internal administration.

At 9:48 a.m., the committee suspend.

At 9:49 a.m., the committee resumed in public.

The Chair made a statement.

The senators introduced themselves.

CIBA/2023-02-16/215(P) — Adoption of *Minutes of Proceedings* from February 2, 2023 (public)

The committee considered the Minutes of Proceedings from February 2, 2023 (public).

After debate, the Honourable Senator Carignan, P.C., moved that the Minutes of Proceedings of Thursday, February 2, 2023 (public), be adopted.

The question being put on the motion, it was adopted.

CIBA/2023-02-16/216(P) — Report from the Subcommittee on Senate Estimates and Committee Budgets

The deputy chair of the Subcommittee on the Senate Estimates and Committee Budgets, the Honourable Senator Marshall, presented the subcommittee's Twelfth Report as follows:

Thursday, February 16, 2023

The Subcommittee on the Senate Estimates and Committee Budgets of the Standing Committee on Internal Economy, Budgets and Administration has the honour to present its

TWELFTH REPORT

Your subcommittee met on February 10, 2023, to consider three budget requests for the 2023-2024 fiscal year as follows:

1. Agriculture and Forestry (AGFO)

Special study on the status of soil health

Activity 1: Fact Finding Trip	\$ 62,080
To Guelph, Ontario	
TOTAL	\$ 62,080

(includes funds for a fact-finding mission and 12 senators to travel in the Spring of 2023)

Your subcommittee met with the chair of the committee on February 10, 2023, to hear about this budget proposal. After review, the subcommittee supports the purpose and motivation behind this

request and recommends that the budget be approved. However, the subcommittee was advised during the budget presentation that the full membership is not likely to participate in this activity and that the committee will consider economy airfares and government hotel rates for all travellers to reduce some of the travel costs. Additionally, although funds for interpretation services are included in the budget request, the committee chair indicated that these services will likely not be required, based on the current membership of the committee.

Your subcommittee is of the view that these cost-saving proposals are commendable and in keeping with the principles of fairness, transparency, accountability, and good governance. However, they are not reflected in the committee's budget submission. If the committee reduces the delegation to 9 senators and 3 staff, includes only economy fares for flights and government rates for hotels for all travellers and removes cost for the rental of interpretation equipment if those services are not needed by the current membership of the committee, the total budget could be reduced to **\$36,220**, which is **42%** less than the original budget submission. Your subcommittee believes that the committee should reduce these contingencies.

Your subcommittee therefore recommends the approval of this budget request, on the condition that it be amended to reflect the actual delegation expected to participate and that the committee follow through on its commitment to reduce travel and accommodation costs and to remove the costs related to interpretation services from its budget, if they are not needed.

2. Fisheries and Oceans (POFO)

Special study on Canada's seal populations and their effect on Canada's fisheries

Activity 1: Newfoundland (St. John's, Elliston, Clarenville, South Dildo)	\$ 172,560
TOTAL	\$ 172,560

(includes funds for a fact-finding mission and public hearings; and includes funds for 12 senators and 2 senators' staff to travel in April 2023)

Your subcommittee supports the purpose and objective behind this budget request. However, the current membership of the committee is 9 members, while the budget requests the funds for 12 members to participate. Although it may be possible that additional members are named to the committee eventually, your subcommittee feels the budget request should be based on the current membership and not a speculative one.

Your subcommittee is also concerned with the strain on resources and additional costs needed to hold public hearings outside of Ottawa. While it recognizes the importance of committees meeting with Canadians in their region, your subcommittee believes that the committee can still engage with key stakeholders and meet its objectives without incurring higher costs or straining resources, if it holds its public hearings on this study in Ottawa. The committee could invite potential witnesses to come to Ottawa or to participate in hearings by videoconference, where there would be no additional costs to provide interpretation and transcription services. Given the current constraints on these services, your subcommittee recommends that, at this time, CIBA not allocate additional resources needed to support public hearings outside of Ottawa.

If the committee includes in its budget only the 9 senators who are currently members of the committee and replaces their planned public hearings in Newfoundland with additional public hearings in Ottawa instead, a significant portion of the cost to rent interpretation equipment and to hire transcription services would also be reduced, and the delegation could be further reduced to 6 staff. With these modifications, the total request could be reduced to **\$116,933**, which represents **32%** less than the original budget submission.

Your subcommittee therefore recommends the approval of this budget request, on the condition that it be amended to reflect the current membership of the committee and that the committee hold its public hearings on this study in Ottawa instead, so that the costs and strain on resources required to support public hearings outside of Ottawa can be significantly reduced.

3. Foreign Affairs and International Trade (AEFA)

Special study on the Canadian foreign service

Activity 1(a): London, U.K.	\$ 170,240
Activity 1(b): Oslo, Norway	\$ 60,714
Activity 1(c): Berlin, Germany	\$ 164,864
TOTAL	\$ 395,818

(includes funds for fact-finding missions and 12 senators and 1 senator staff to travel in April 2023)

Your subcommittee takes no issue with the purpose of this study, or the objectives of this mission. However, your subcommittee believes that any recommendation should be made with the goal of ensuring that the Senate's resources are used in the most effective and responsible manner possible. The subcommittee was told in this case that all twelve members of the committee have expressed their interest in travelling, which means the committee is likely to require closer to the full amount being budgeted.

Considering the current economic situation, your subcommittee believes it must encourage a more prudent use of public funds. **At this time, your subcommittee cannot recommend the approval of this budget request, particularly for such a large delegation for an international fact-finding mission.**

Your subcommittee does not take this decision lightly. It encourages the committee to explore alternative ways to achieve the same goals without incurring the significant costs related to international travel. If, for example, the committee were to reduce the number of travellers to 6 senators instead of all 12 members of the committee, the total request could be reduced to **\$241,714**, which represents **39%** less than the original budget submission. Additional savings could be found by removing the request for interpreters in the UK or by eliminating one of the destinations and meeting instead with international stakeholders by videoconference as a part of the committee's public hearings on this study from Ottawa.

4. Other Considerations

Finally, your subcommittee wishes to raise a general concern about the intended timing of all three trips in these budget requests. All three committees expressed a wish to travel in April, during sitting weeks. Your subcommittee strongly encourages committees to plan their travel on non-sitting weeks, to

the extent possible, which would reduce the strain on the various resources that normally support the work of senators when the Senate is sitting, and committees are meeting.

On a final note, the total funds in the budgetary envelope available for Senate committee budgets for 2023-2024 will be **\$2.203 million**, less **\$320,820** for witness expenses, leaving **\$1.882 million** for release to individual committee budgets.

The budgets approved by the Senate for each travel activity are the maximum amount that can be spent for that activity. Typically, committees' actual expenditures are closer to 40% of their total budget request. Any funds remaining at the conclusion of a travel activity will be clawed-back and can be made available for allocation to committees for other activities.

Copies of each committee's budget application are appended to this report.

Respectfully submitted,

ELIZABETH MARSHALL

Deputy Chair

The Honourable Senator Marshall made a statement and answered questions.

After debate, it was agreed that the chair send a letter to committee chairs on matters to consider while preparing budgetary requests for committee travel.

It was also agreed that the Subcommittee on Senate Estimates and Committee Budgets be mandated to review committee budgetary process and provide recommendations on appropriate guidelines.

The Honourable Senator Marshall moved that the subcommittee's Twelfth Report be adopted.

The question being put on the motion, it was adopted.

CIBA/2023-02-16/217(P) — Report from the Subcommittee on Agenda and Procedure — Travel Expenses on Corporate Card

The Honourable Senator Moncion made a statement regarding the Senate corporate credit card.

After debate, it was agreed that at a future committee meeting, an advisory working group be created to review the use of the Senate corporate credit card.

CIBA/2023-02-16/218(P) — Ongoing Software and Support Service Contracts

David Vatcher made a statement regarding the annual ongoing software, support, and maintenance service contracts.

After debate, it was moved by the Honourable Senator Dalphond that approval be granted for the renewal of the following software, maintenance and/or support service contracts, for fiscal year 2023-24:

- Advantage Software Inc. (Eclipse): \$ 37,825 CAD (\$ 29,065 USD)

- CGI (NJoyn): \$ 19,883
- Druide Informatique (Antidote): \$ 5,367
- Global Publishing (Arbortext Advance Print Publisher): \$ 39,180
- Herjavec (McAfee Endpoint Protection): \$ 19,440
- Just Systems (XMAX Concurrent): \$ 19,325 CAD (\$14,850 USD)
- Logiciels Xceed (WPF Team): \$ 8,010 CAD (\$ 6,390 USD)
- Microsoft (Unified Support Enterprise): \$ 60,788
- Quest Software Canada (Desktop Authority Professional): \$ 9,411
- Quest Software Canada (Enterprise Reporter): \$ 2,909
- Site Secure Software Inc. (Site Secure Software): \$ 27,500
- Sliq Media Technologies (AudioLogger and Razorback Turnkey Video Encoder): \$ 7,474
- Sliq Media Technologies (AudioLogger and SliqScribe Audio Player): \$ 8,966
- Softchoice (Harmon.ie): \$ 12,015
- Softchoice (Hootsuite): \$ 10,340
- Softchoice (On-demand Maintenance): \$ 21,970
- SoftChoice (Win Net Advantage Infragistics): \$ 8,792
- Solid CADGROUP (AutoCad): \$ 11,262
- Teramach Technologies (CommVault): \$ 9,202
- Teramach Technologies (Metallic Office 365 Backup and Recovery): \$ 32,882
- TerraNova Worldwide (Learning Management System): \$ 8,655
- Umbraco LTD (Umbraco Forms): \$ 8,785 CAD (\$ 6,750 USD)
- Zoom Video Communications (Zoom): \$ 22,655

The question being put on the motion, it was adopted.

CIBA/2023-02-16/219(P) — Proposal for a Pilot Project with the Canada School of Public Service

Toni Francis made a statement and, together with Philippe Hallée, answered questions regarding a proposal for a pilot project with the Canada School of Public Service.

After debate, the Honourable Senator Saint-Germain moved that the Senate Administration be permitted to enter into a Memorandum of Understanding with the Canada School of Public Service for a two-year pilot, beginning on April 1, 2023, and ending on March 31, 2025, to grant all Senate employees with access to numerous learning products.

The question being put on the motion, it was adopted.

CIBA/2023-02-16/220(P) — Funeral Policy

Greg Peters made a statement regarding the changes to the *Senate Policy on Funerals* and the proposed amendments to the *Senators' Office Management Policy*.

After debate, the Honourable Senator Gagné moved:

That the current Funeral Policy be repealed;

That the new policy be under the authority of the Speaker; and

That the proposed changes to the *Senators' Office Management Policy* be approved.

The question being put on the motion, it was adopted.

CIBA/2023-02-16/221(P) — Institutional Risk Management Framework and Risk Register

Pierre Lanctôt made a statement and answered questions regarding the Institutional Risk Management Framework and Risk Register.

At 10:54 a.m., the committee adjourned to the call of the chair.

ATTEST:

Pascale Legault

*Chief Corporate Services Officer and Clerk of the Standing Committee on
Internal Economy, Budgets and Administration*

Keli Hogan

Recording Secretary