



## MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS

OTTAWA, Thursday, June 15, 2023  
(25)

[English]

The Standing Committee on Internal Economy, Budgets and Administration met in camera and then proceeded in public, this day at 8:31 a.m., in room C128, Senate of Canada Building, the chair, the Honourable Lucie Moncion, presiding.

*Members of the committee present:* The Honourable Senators Audette, Boehm, Boyer, Carignan, P.C., Dalphond, Forest, Loffreda, Moncion, Moodie, Plett, Quinn, Saint Germain, Seidman, Smith and Tannas (15).

*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 Raymonde Saint-Germain, Co-Chair, Joint Interparliamentary Council;

The Honourable Scott Tannas, Chair, Subcommittee on Long Term Vision and Plan;

The Honourable Senator Larry W. Smith, Chair, Subcommittee on Communications;

Shaila Anwar, Clerk Assistant, Committees Directorate;

Josée Labelle, Director General, Property and Services Directorate;

Jeremy LeBlanc, Clerk Assistant and Director General, International and Interparliamentary Affairs;

Mélisa Leclerc, Director, Communications Directorate.

David Vatcher, Director, Information Services Directorate;

Julia Zayed, Officer, Accessibility, Communications 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 10:07 a.m., the committee suspended.

At 10:10 a.m., the committee resumed in public.

The Chair made a statement.

The senators introduced themselves.

**CIBA/2023-06-15/274(P) — Adoption of *Minutes of Proceedings* from June 1, 2023 (public)**

The committee considered the Minutes of Proceedings from June 1, 2023 (public).

The Honourable Senator Forest moved that the Minutes of Proceedings of Thursday, June 1, 2023 (public), be adopted.

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

**CIBA/2023-06-15/275(P) — Report from the Subcommittee on the Long Term Vision and Plan (LTVP)**

The chair of the Subcommittee on the Long-Term Vision Plan, the Honourable Senator Tannas, presented the subcommittee's Sixth Report as follows:

**Thursday, June 15, 2023**

The Subcommittee on the Long-Term Vision and Plan of the Standing Committee on Internal Economy, Budgets and Administration has the honour to present its

**SIXTH REPORT**

Your subcommittee, which was authorized by the Standing Committee on Internal Economy, Budgets and Administration (CIBA) to study and report on the program of work for the Long-Term Vision and Plan for the parliamentary precinct, now presents its sixth report.

Your subcommittee met on May 9, 2023, at which time members agreed to make the recommendations on the following three items:

**Renaming of the Eastern tower in the Block 2 complex**

In June 2022, your subcommittee recommended that the Eastern tower of Block 2 be confirmed as a permanent Senate building in the end state. Block 2 is a collection of 11 buildings that are located on the city block facing Parliament Hill bounded by Wellington, O'Connor, Sparks and Metcalfe Street. Block 2 will be separated into eastern and western complexes by the Indigenous People's space, which is located along Wellington Street, facing Parliament Hill.

The Eastern tower of Block 2 is expected to be located at the corner of Wellington and Metcalfe Street and will include senators' offices, meeting and committee rooms and will have an integrated Senate business entrance. The building will be part of the new "campus" tunnel loop that will connect all of the buildings on Parliament Hill to those on Wellington Street.

Now that the Senate has confirmed the Eastern tower of Block 2 as a permanent Senate building in the end state, your subcommittee would like to propose that the building be renamed to clearly define and properly reflect its permanent occupants throughout the design and redevelopment phase.

## **RECOMMENDATION 1**

**Accordingly, your subcommittee proposes that CIBA advise Public Services and Procurement Canada (PSPC) that the Eastern tower, Block 2, be renamed the "*Senate Office Complex (SOC)*" (or "*Complexe des bureaux du Sénat (CBS)*" in French).**

### **Self-contained Washroom Units**

On November 18, 2022, your subcommittee met as a Joint Forum with members of the House of Commons Working Group on the LTVP. The Joint Forum agreed that the term "self-contained washroom unit" would be used as the common terminology for washrooms that could be used by all persons in the Centre Block and Parliament Welcome Centre (PWC).

A self-contained washroom is one small room consisting of a toilet, sink, mirror, soap, and paper dispenser as well as a disposal receptacle. In addition to being more economical, self-contained washrooms can be used by all persons, which is expected to result in shorter wait times, an increase in the number of accessible washrooms, more convenient locations, and more overall washroom capacity. Most importantly, this design concept allows for a more effective use of space, which is already at a premium in heritage buildings such as Centre Block and East Block.

Your subcommittee supports the idea of extending this concept to all future LTVP development and rehabilitation projects, to ensure consistency and alignment with the standard being created for the Centre Block and PWC.

## **RECOMMENDATION 2**

**Accordingly, your subcommittee recommends that CIBA advise PSPC that all future LTVP redevelopment and rehabilitation projects include self-contained washroom units as a functional requirement for all washrooms.**

### **Infrastructure for the Senate Chamber**

Finally, your subcommittee was advised that the House of Commons' Information Technology Project Management Office (ITPMO) has been mandated to install the necessary infrastructure in the Centre Block to support business continuity and resiliency, including the possibility of virtual or hybrid proceedings.

A decision to proceed with this future-proofing measure has already been endorsed for the House of Commons chamber in the Centre Block. Of note, the installation of this infrastructure will not require any additional funding as this is already part of the scope of work. Your subcommittee believes the Senate Chamber in the Centre Block should be similarly equipped.

### RECOMMENDATION 3

**Accordingly, your subcommittee recommends that CIBA advise PSPC that the Senate Chamber in the Centre Block be equipped with the necessary infrastructure to support the possibility of virtual or hybrid proceedings as a business continuity measure, to future-proof the Senate and ensure that it can continue to meet without interruption.**

Respectfully submitted,

**SCOTT TANNAS**  
*Chair of the Subcommittee*

The Honourable Senator Tannas made a statement and, together with Josée Labelle, answered questions regarding the Sixth Report.

After debate, the Honourable Senator Tannas moved that the subcommittee's Sixth Report be adopted.

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

At 10:37 a.m., the Honourable Senator Quinn replaced the Honourable Senator Tannas as a member of the committee.

### **CIBA/2023-06-15/276(P) — Request from the Joint Interparliamentary Council to Harmonize the Travel Policy**

The Honourable Senator Saint-Germain made a statement and, together with Jeremy LeBlanc, answered questions regarding the amendment to the *Senators' Office Management Policy* relating to the use of travel points for International and Interparliamentary Affairs related activities.

After debate, the Honourable Senator Saint-Germain moved that the section 7.5.2. of the *Senators' Office Management Policy* be amended as follows:

**7.5.2.** Subject to the exception below, a senator's parliamentary *association or parliamentary exchanges travel related expenses ("IIA travel expenses") shall be deducted from the budget of that association or from the parliamentary exchanges' budget when the senator is a member of an official delegation.*

- a. For meetings or activities in the Parliamentary District, the travel expenses are charged to the Travel Points System and the living expenses are charged to the living expense budget.
- b. *For meetings or activities held within Canada, travel expenses may be charged to the Travel Points System.*
- c. *For meetings or activities held outside Canada, the following may be charged to the Travel Points System when travelling with a parliamentary association:*
  - i. **Fare Class Upgrades:**

When the fare class for air travel is economy class, senators may upgrade to business class. The difference in cost will be deducted from the Travel Points System.

***ii. Living Expenses:***

When the association is only paying the transportation expenses, living expenses incurred while travelling may be reimbursed under the Travel Points System.

***iii. Travel to Departure Points for Parliamentary Association Travel:***

When it is planned that all participants leave from the same Canadian departure point, travel within Canada to reach that departure point may be charged to the Travel Points System if it is not covered by the parliamentary association budget. Generally, the departure location for all travel shall be the senator's province/territory, the Parliamentary District, or a location where the senator was conducting parliamentary functions. Exceptions will be assessed where the cost is equivalent or less.

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

**CIBA/2023-06-15/277(P) — Joint Interparliamentary Council — Budgetary Surplus from the 65th Commonwealth Parliamentary Conference**

The Honourable Senator Saint-Germain made a statement and, together with Jeremy LeBlanc, answered questions regarding the budgetary surplus from the 65<sup>th</sup> Commonwealth Parliamentary Conference.

After debate, the Honourable Senator Saint-Germain moved that the Joint Interparliamentary Council be permitted to use the federal portion of the surplus from the 65th Commonwealth Parliamentary Conference, held in Halifax, Nova Scotia, in August 2022, to pay for the annual contribution of the Canadian Branch to the Canadian Region of the CPA and to use the savings generated to finance other association activities.

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

**CIBA/2023-06-15/278(P) — Working Group on Corporate Credit Cards — Motion to Extend Mandate**

The Honourable Senator Carignan, P.C., moved that, notwithstanding the decision of CIBA adopted on Thursday, March 9, 2023, the date for the final report of the Advisory Working Group on the Senate Corporate Credit Card be extended from June 30, 2023 to June 30, 2024.

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

## **CIBA/2023-06-15/279(P) — Report from the Subcommittee on Communications**

The Honourable Senator Smith, chair of the Subcommittee on Communications, presented the subcommittee's First Report as follows:

Thursday, June 15, 2023

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

### **FIRST REPORT**

Your subcommittee, which was authorized by the Standing Committee on Internal Economy, Budgets and Administration (CIBA) to examine and report on issues related to Senate communications and broadcasting, and to provide advice on the Senate's communications strategy and its implementation, including communication approaches used to promote the role and work of the Senate and senators, now presents its first report.

On May 30, 2023, your subcommittee met to consider the following two items:

#### **SENATE ACCESSIBILITY PLAN PROGRESS REPORT**

Your subcommittee received a presentation from the Senate's Accessibility Officer on the progress report for the Senate of Canada's 2023-2025 Accessibility Plan. Your subcommittee heard that 9 of the 12 objectives scheduled to be completed in 2023 are in progress and the remaining ones will be started this summer. Some of the milestones accomplished in support of these objectives include:

- the completion of accessibility audits of the Senate parliamentary buildings;
- the implementation of a new Communication Access Realtime Translation (CART) system, which is used to allow closed captions of live proceedings to be viewed from anywhere, on any device, which is on track for the fall; and
- the selection of a provider for a new online job application system to ensure compliance with web accessibility standards.

Consultations on the plan's progress (required by the *Accessible Canada Act*), are being scheduled for the fall. Individuals with disabilities who have had recent interactions with the Senate and Senate committees, such as witnesses for Bill C-22, the *Canada Disability Benefit Act*, will be invited to participate.

Your subcommittee is pleased with the progress on the Senate of Canada's Accessibility Plan and has provided a copy of the progress report to CIBA for information.

An annual progress report will be presented to CIBA in December for approval, before being published on the Senate website and submitted to the Accessibility Commissioner of Canada as required by the *Accessible Canada Act* and its regulations.

## BROADCASTING OPERATIONS AND INFRASTRUCTURE

Your subcommittee met with officials from the Senate Administration to review the consequences of maintaining or downgrading the Senate's current committee broadcasting model to the House of Commons' webcasting model. Your subcommittee has provided a copy of a detailed briefing note to CIBA for additional information.

Previous CIBA decisions taken in [May 2019](#) and [December 2019](#) have affirmed the Senate's interest in maintaining the full-service broadcasting model, which meets quality requirements for television broadcasters (e.g., CPAC) and allows for important contextual information to be provided to viewers via on-screen graphics. However, keeping the broadcasting model is more expensive and costs are anticipated to rise moving forward; converting two committee rooms to webcast technology would result in savings at the cost of making committee meetings less publicly accessible.

### COSTS

Webcasting	Broadcasting
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Your subcommittee heard that there could be cost savings of approximately \$100,000 per year over the next five years (personnel and equipment) should the Senate decide to convert two committee rooms to a webcast technology.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>The cost of broadcasting increased from \$850,375 to \$980,449 last year primarily due to the House of Commons beginning to incorporate the effect of salary increases for its employees for services provided under the Services Level Agreement.</li><li>The House of Commons is now reclassifying casual positions as indeterminate positions, which will raise the cost of broadcasting for the next fiscal year to an estimated \$1,531,097.</li></ul>

### SERVICES PROVIDED

Webcasting	Broadcasting
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>No distribution of webcast committee meetings via CPAC, which reaches rural and remote communities, including Indigenous communities.</li><li>No on-screen graphics to provide contextual information for media and the public (e.g., name of the senator speaking, subject of discussion).</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>CPAC broadcasts of Senate committee meetings — which reaches rural and remote communities, including Indigenous communities — would continue.</li><li>On-screen graphics would continue to be provided.</li></ul>

It should be noted that the House of Commons webcasting model was intended as an upgrade to the House of Commons' audio-only committee rooms. Should the Senate choose to implement a webcasting model, it would be a downgrade of its existing services. Moreover, should the Senate choose to implement webcasting and subsequently reconsider, the costs to retrofit committee rooms for broadcasting would require significant financial investment.

Meanwhile, some cost savings have been made through the implementation of Zoom appearances for witnesses. Prior to the pandemic, approximately \$360,000 to \$450,000 of the \$500,000 witness expenses budget was spent each year on items such as travel and traditional videoconferencing facilities. Since the pandemic, Zoom has eliminated the need to use traditional videoconferencing facilities. For fiscal year 2023-24, \$179,180 of the witness expenses budget was transferred to the Information Services Directorate to pay for Zoom support technicians, leaving the witness expenses budget envelope with \$320,820. During the previous fiscal year, the Committees Directorate incurred witness expenses of \$94,281; witness expenses are anticipated to rise during fiscal year 2023-24 but to remain lower than in pre-pandemic years.

Senate committee proceedings have been broadcast since 1998 and are highly regarded by other legislatures. Whereas the House of Commons provides televised broadcasting services for only two meetings per timeslot, the Senate has the capacity to broadcast four meetings per timeslot. Committee work is said to be the "heart and soul of the Senate." Your subcommittee believes that it is in the Senate's best interests for this important work to remain widely accessible to Canadians from coast to coast to coast.

## **RECOMMENDATION**

**Accordingly, your subcommittee recommends that the Senate maintain its current broadcasting operations and infrastructure to ensure broadcasting excellence; and that the Communications Directorate continue to closely monitor webcasting developments at the House of Commons and other legislatures and seek opportunities for the Senate to leverage technological developments which are cost-effective without downgrading established Senate broadcasting standards.**

Respectfully submitted,

LARRY W. SMITH

*Chair*

The Honourable Senator Smith made a statement regarding the First Report.

After debate, the Honourable Senator Smith moved that the subcommittee's First Report be adopted.

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

It was agreed that item 12 be postponed to a future CIBA meeting.



**CIBA/2023-06-15/280(P) — Transfer of Specialized Equipment from Public Services and Procurement Canada to Senate**

Josée Labelle made a statement and, together with Pascale Legault, answered questions regarding the transfer of specialized equipment from Public Services and Procurement Canada to the Senate.

After debate, the Honourable Senator Dalphond moved:

That the Senate Administration be authorized to continue with sole source contracts with Public Services and Procurement Canada and related Expense Initiation for the provision of additional specialized equipment maintenance for the 2023-24 fiscal year, whose aggregate costs are estimated at \$145,000; and

That the amount be funded internally via budget reallocation if need be.

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

**CIBA/2023-06-15/281(P) — Report from the Subcommittee on Agenda and Procedure — Decisions reported to CIBA**

The chair of the Subcommittee on Agenda and Procedure, the Honourable Senator Moncion, tabled the Seventeenth Report as follows:

Thursday, June 15, 2023

The Subcommittee on Agenda and Procedure of the Standing Committee on Internal Economy, Budgets and Administration has the honour to tabled its

**SEVENTEENTH REPORT**

Your subcommittee wishes to report on the following decisions taken on June 8, 2023.

**1. Semi-annual Update on Legal Services Contracts and Litigation**

It was agreed that future semi-annual updates on legal services contract and litigation be presented only to the Subcommittee on Agenda and Procedure.

**2. Counselling Services by Witnesses**

It was agreed that the Committees Directorate continue, until the end of June 2025, the pilot project to offer mental health services or other culturally sensitive counselling as an eligible expense for reimbursement , upon application by Senate committee witnesses.

It was also agreed that the Committees Directorate report the results to CIBA at the end of the pilot project.

It was further agreed that other support and counselling options presented to CIBA (acquiring support services through a contract or offering on-site support services similar to the Employee and Family Assistance Program) not be pursued at this time.

Respectfully submitted,

**LUCIE MONCION**

*Chair*

At 11:00 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*