



MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS

OTTAWA, Thursday, April 16, 2026

(11)

[English]

The Standing Committee on Internal Economy, Budgets and Administration (CIBA) met this day at 8:03 a.m., in room C128, Senate of Canada Building.

Members of the committee present: The Honourable Senators Boehm, Boyer, Cardozo, Forest, Henkel, Loffreda, MacAdam, MacDonald, Moodie, Osler, Oudar, Quinn, Smith, and Tannas (14).

Other senators present: The Honourable Senator Mohamed and Saint-Germain (2).

Participating in the meeting: Shaila Anwar, Clerk of the Senate and Clerk of the Parliaments; Marie-Ève Belzile, Deputy Clerk, Legislative Services; Pascale Legault, Chief Corporate Services Officer and Clerk of the Standing Committee on Internal Economy, Budgets and Administration; Julie Wellington, Law Clerk and Parliamentary Counsel; senior Senate officials and other support staff.

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.

WITNESSES:

The Honourable Senator Raymonde Saint-Germain, Co-Chair, Joint Interparliamentary Council;

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

David Vatcher, Chief Information Officer, Information Services Directorate.

The chair made a statement.

The senators introduced themselves.

It was agreed that item 3 of the agenda be deferred to a future meeting of the committee.

CIBA/2026-04-16/111(P) – Consent Agenda

The chair made a statement regarding the consent agenda.

The Honourable Senator Boyer moved that the consent agenda, which is comprised of the following items, be adopted:

- Minutes of Proceedings from March 12, 2026 (In Public);
- Minutes of Proceedings from March 12, 2026 (In Camera).

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

CIBA/2026-04-16/112(P) – Letter from the Joint Interparliamentary Council – Travel Points System for travel to the United States

The Honourable Senator Saint-Germain made a statement and, together with Jeremy Leblanc, answered questions regarding a letter received from the Joint Interparliamentary Council on the travel points system for travel to the United States.

After debate, the Honourable Senator Henkel moved that the Senate Administration prepare a proposal reflecting the proposed changes in the Senators' Office Management Policy and develop an estimate of the travel budget requirements for 2027–28 for consideration by CIBA at a future committee meeting.

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

CIBA/2026-04-16/113(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 Loffreda, tabled the Sixth Report of the subcommittee as follows:

Thursday, April 16, 2026

The Subcommittee on Agenda and Procedure of the Standing Committee on Internal Economy, Budgets and Administration (CIBA) has the honour to table its

SIXTH REPORT

Your subcommittee wishes to report on the following decisions taken on March 26th, 2026.

1. Use of Surpluses from Overall Senators' Office Budget Funding Envelope to Cover the Pressure of Changes in Leadership

It was agreed that the Senate Administration be authorized to proceed with the required in-year budget transfer, up to a maximum of \$347,000, from expected surpluses from the overall senators' office budget funding envelope to cover the pressure attributable to payouts associated with the changes in leadership within the Canadian Senators Group (CSG) and the Independent Senators Group (ISG).

2. Impact of Equity Review on Senator Office Budget

It was agreed that the current senators' office budgets of \$ 281,350 be maintained as of April 1, 2026, and that the situation be closely monitored.

Your subcommittee instructed the Senate Administration to forecast the overall senators' office budget potential shortfall for the fiscal year 2026-2027 and that an internal source of funds be identified for reallocation to fund the salary shortfall, as required.

Your subcommittee further instructed the Senate Administration to provide, this fall, a comprehensive financial analysis of the ongoing needs of senators' office budgets to identify options for a permanent solution in the long term.

Your subcommittee has taken these steps to ensure that Senate resources continue to be managed in a diligent and responsible manner, consistent with the efficiency review undertaken in 2023.

Respectfully submitted,

TONY LOFFREDA

Chair

The chair made a statement and, together with Pascale Legault, answered questions regarding the Sixth Report of the Subcommittee on Agenda and Procedure.

It was agreed that item 5 of the agenda be deferred to the next meeting of the committee.

CIBA/2026-04-16/114(P) – Microsoft Teams Phones for Senators' Offices

David Vatcher made a statement and answered questions regarding the migration to the Microsoft Teams Telephony System in senators' offices.

After debate, the Honourable Senator Forest moved:

That the MS Teams Telephony be deployed throughout Senate-occupied spaces;

That the Information Services Directorate expands the deployment of the new system before the end of fiscal year 2026-27, by prioritizing and allowing faster or slower transitions, as requested by users;

That the Senate Administration leverages the current telephony contract with Shared Services Canada to progressively transition from Bell Centrex to the MS Teams Telephony system;

That the Senate Administration proceed with the purchase of physical desktop telephones; and

That following operational and security requirements assessment, the Senate Administration transition the appropriate number of operation lines (currently 100) to other platforms such as MS Teams.

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

CIBA/2026-04-16/115(P) – For Information - Item sent via email

The chair made a statement regarding the items that were sent via email to members for information purposes:

- Report from the Subcommittee on Senate Estimates and Committee Budgets – Quarterly Financial Report (Q3);
- Update on the Modernization of the Pay System for Active and Retired Senators;
- 2025 Senators' Satisfaction Services Survey.

CIBA/2026-04-16/116(P) – Other Matters

The Honourable Senator Moodie made a statement regarding the creation of the Subcommittee on Diversity.

At 8:50 a.m., the committee suspended.

At 8:52 a.m., pursuant to rule 12-16(1), the committee resumed in camera.

At 10:00 a.m., the committee suspended.

At 10:01 a.m., the committee resumed in public.

CIBA/2026-04-16/122(P) – Report from the Subcommittee on the Long-Term Vision and Plan

During the in camera portion of the meeting, the committee considered a report from the Subcommittee on the Long-Term Vision and Plan and agreed that the following approved recommendations be made public:

That CIBA approve the design development of the Centre Block Project, provided that Public Services and Procurement Canada (PSPC) commits to incorporating the Senate's requirements as the design work progresses;

That PSPC be instructed to return to the subcommittee in the event that changes to the Senate's design and security requirements are needed as part of the development and implementation of the project;

That the subcommittee continue its internal and external consultations regarding the war paintings and their conservation, and that, in the interim, PSPC be authorized to proceed with the design of the remainder of Centre Block;

That PSPC be instructed to proceed with the agreed upon move-in schedule, with the understanding that the delivery of the full lobby and guard post will need to be completed before the scheduled move-in in January 2027, and that PSPC initiate without delay all necessary consultations with the National Capital Commission and the City of Ottawa for the implementation of the recommended safety measures; and

That PSPC be required, in consultation with the relevant partners, to develop options that fully respond to the Senate's security and design requirements, and to return before the LTVP subcommittee to seek final direction, including with respect to the proposed approach, costs, schedule, and constraints.

That, subject to the Speaker's agreement, the Senate maintains that there should be no forecourt trees due to security considerations and to ensure a more cost-effective use of taxpayer funds. However, the Senate will not stand in the way of PSPC from seeking a Federal Land Use Approval from the National Capital Commission, provided that the proposal and final decision on the installation of trees be considered and taken jointly between the Senate and the House of Commons, in consultation with partners and the Parliamentary Protective Service; and

That PSPC be authorized to proceed with the implementation of the landscape design concept relating to implementing the infrastructure to support the installation of trees in the future, notwithstanding the Senate's continued position that no trees should be installed on the forecourt of Centre Block, including the Wellington Street Wall, for security reasons and because this option represents a more cost-effective use of public funds.

Your subcommittee recommends that an official inauguration ceremony be planned to mark the reopening of the Governor General's entrance to the East Block.

CIBA took note from the report that prioritizing Canadian materials and labour remains a core principle of the project and has been further reinforced by the "Buy Canadian" policy.

CIBA/2026-04-16/123(P) – Other Matters

The chair paid tribute to the Honourable Senator Smith, who will soon be retiring from the Senate.

The Honourable Senator Henkel made a statement congratulating Dimitri Bandini on receiving his Canadian citizenship.

At 10:03 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