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Official Report of Debates (Hansard)

Tuesday 13 April 2010

Journal des débats (Hansard)

Mardi 13 avril 2010

**Standing Committee on
Government Agencies**

Intended appointments

**Comité permanent des
organismes gouvernementaux**

Nominations prévues

Chair: Ernie Hardeman
Clerk: Douglas Arnott

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

STANDING COMMITTEE ON
GOVERNMENT AGENCIESCOMITÉ PERMANENT DES
ORGANISMES GOUVERNEMENTAUX

Tuesday 13 April 2010

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The committee met at 0905 in committee room 1.

SUBCOMMITTEE REPORTS

The Chair (Mr. Ernie Hardeman): I call the meeting to order for April 13, the Standing Committee on Government Agencies meeting this morning. First of all, we thank you for being here.

Our first order of business this morning is to deal with the subcommittee report of April 1. A motion to accept the report of April 1?

Mr. Michael A. Brown: I so move, Mr. Chair.

The Chair (Mr. Ernie Hardeman): Any discussion? If not, all those in favour? Opposed? The motion is carried.

The second is the subcommittee report for April 8. A motion to deal with it? Mr. Brown?

Mr. Michael A. Brown: I so move, Mr. Chair.

The Chair (Mr. Ernie Hardeman): We've heard the motion. Any discussion on the April 8 report of the subcommittee? If not, all those in favour? Opposed? The motion is carried.

INTENDED APPOINTMENTS

MS. FAY BOOKER

Review of intended appointment, selected by official opposition party: Fay Booker, intended appointee as member and chair, Niagara Parks Commission.

The Chair (Mr. Ernie Hardeman): Now we'll proceed with the appointment reviews this morning. Our first interview today is with Fay Booker, intended appointee as member and chair, Niagara Parks Commission. Ms. Booker, if you would come forward and take a seat there. First of all, thank you for coming in and offering your services and coming in for the interview this morning. We will start the process with you, giving you the opportunity to make a short statement and to explain a little bit about yourself and your reason for the appointment. Then, each party will have an opportunity to ask you some questions to find out a little bit more about you. This time, we will start the questions with the official opposition. It will be 10 minutes for each party to relay their questions.

With that, I'll turn the meeting over to you to make your presentation.

Ms. Fay Booker: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Good morning to the members of the committee. I would like to begin by saying that I am pleased to be considered for appointment as chair of the Niagara Parks Commission. I believe you've been provided with my CV that provides an outline of my professional background. I would just like to add a little bit to that.

I was born and raised in the rural area of Haldimand county, which is on the shores of Lake Erie and is a neighbouring community to Niagara region. I remember the Niagara Parks Commission from my early days as a child, as that was our main destination of vacation as I was growing up. For a couple of years, when I was articling in the accounting profession, I actually worked and lived in St. Catharines and got to enjoy being part of the Niagara region at that time as well.

After I graduated from university, I did move to Toronto. I did spend a lot of time in Toronto, and that's where a lot of my professional background does come from. But, fortunately, I was able to move closer to the Niagara region a number of years ago and actually now reside in Burlington.

You will see in my CV that my professional background does include a progressive career in the audit and accounting profession, and I was admitted into partnership with the firm of Deloitte. I did wish to extend and expand my horizons, so I moved out of the accounting and auditing profession and moved into the financial services sector and worked as a leader in an internal audit practice for a couple of our major financial institutions.

I then left banking and returned to the accounting profession, but on the consulting side, with a specific focus on the governance area. It was at this time that we saw new regulations being introduced with respect to governance in trying to improve the governance of organizations in North America.

Since 2005, I have actually been leading my own consulting firm, with a specific focus on corporate governance and enterprise risk management.

So I do bring to your consideration 25 years of experience that has covered finance, governance, accountability and enterprise risk management. I've consulted with organizations in various sectors: industry, of course, as well as crown corporations, community and cooperatives. I've worked in facilitating them in finding solutions to maximize their accountability to their stakeholders and their returns.

A few years ago, I decided to actually expand my knowledge base yet again. I was looking for a way to gain a better understanding of governance in government. I did spend some time in finding ways to participate in the political process, so you are aware that I've made donations to political parties. Actually, for four months, I served as the treasurer for the Burlington Federal Liberal Association to see what that involved in terms of accountability.

I currently chair the political action committee for the Burlington Chamber of Commerce, and I also sit as a member of the advisory committee for the councillor for ward 2 in Burlington.

My family, to this day, enjoys the Niagara Parks Commission. We enjoy the many offerings that the Niagara Parks Commission provides to us. The visitors who we have entertained and hosted both locally within the province, across Canada, as well as internationally, have enjoyed their visits to Niagara Falls, with us hosting and enjoying the picnic areas, the historic sites and all that the parks have to offer.

So I would be proud to serve the province as chair of the Niagara Parks Commission. It is a jewel for the citizens of the province, and I would like to contribute to tending that jewel with the degree of respect and integrity it deserves. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

0910

The Chair (Mr. Ernie Hardeman): Thank you very much for your presentation. We will start with Ms. MacLeod.

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: Welcome, Ms. Booker. I know that many people in Niagara region are asking why the McGuinty Liberals chose someone from outside the region for chair of this commission. I would like to know why you think the Liberals believe there's no one capable in Niagara to do this job. Do you agree with them on that?

Ms. Fay Booker: I believe we have great people in this province, and I understand that there has been a focus on looking for competency-based boards and bringing competencies to boards to enable them in doing good governance for the organization. I applied for the position based on what I believe I brought to the government, to the Niagara Parks Commission, to help it as it moves forward. I hope I was considered based on that merit.

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: Your appointment, as you know, has caused a bit of public outcry in Niagara. We have heard not only from the media, but also several people have emailed the official opposition. As you know, our leader, Tim Hudak, is from the Niagara region. I'd like to read an email from a resident in Niagara Falls who asked that I pose this question to you:

"On becoming a member of this board, a commissioner gains access to several 'perks.' The main one that I believe has been of the highest interest to those members new to the commission is free golf. In my opinion, this has led to the appointment of commissioners who are not interested in the operation of the park but

only interested in the free golf. Do you believe that having a smoothly operating Niagara Parks Commission under your leadership would be reward enough for your services or that being a commissioner should entitle you to other perks?"

Ms. Fay Booker: It's a great question. I would also like to respond, as well, that I have received a number of emails from residents of Niagara very pleased to have seen my nomination. With respect to "perks," as it's been termed, I think that this is not about perks. In fact, I wasn't quite aware that golf was such a big piece of the area of attention for the Niagara Parks Commission. I know Niagara Parks as the parks, the falls and the historic pieces that they are attending to. That, to me, is the priority.

I do play golf. I am a member of a golf club in Hamilton. That is where my husband and I spend time playing golf. I do not see it being a requirement of being a good commissioner, to be participating in the golf courses as a prime consideration.

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: Still with accountability: The Globe and Mail on December 26, 2009, noted "widespread problems at the parks commission, including undocumented decisions, missing records, breaches of its code of conduct by commissioners and a general lack of transparency." I've got a couple questions for you.

Do you agree with the KPMG recommendation for commissioners to make your expenses public?

According to the KPMG audit, "The effectiveness of the board has been significantly impacted by politics, external influences and style differences." Do you believe this will continue under your watch as a commissioner, given your extensive Liberal ties?

Ms. Fay Booker: The first question being with respect to expenses, I am on record for making expenses publicly available. When I was chair of the hospital board, my expenses, as little as they were, were submitted to the audit committee for review by the audit committee, the auditors and the rest of the board, and would be available to anyone who asked for those.

With respect to my other view on expenses, in fact, I have made recommendations with respect to openness and transparency around expenses. I do believe that is something that should be made open and available, so I do not have a problem at all with submitting that. I understand that the commission has made their board meetings open as of January 2010, so the expenses can be provided as part of that open process.

With respect to the KPMG report, I'm not privy to all the details that KPMG had access to in formulating their view, but, yes, what they reported was with respect to influence and political interests and different style.

I think the different style is an interesting one. I think boards need to spend time working together as a team and learning what it is and how they should provide their governance in the best interest of the organization and the manner in which they can do that in the best interest of the organization. It was unclear to me by "style" whether they mean individual commissioners, but if that is what it

is, I think the commissioners need to have a discussion around “How do we effect good governance?” and “What are the behavioural aspects that go along with that?” It’s both process and behaviours, so we would need to have a discussion about that and be conducting ourselves in a manner that is appropriate to the commission.

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: Just one final question, and it’s with regard to accountability as well.

During the time that you were a partner at Grant Thornton, your company received \$50,000 in untendered contracts from the North West and North East LHINs. During your time as a partner at Deloitte and Touche, your company received untendered contracts from the Waterloo and Toronto LHINs, totalling \$272,000.

Given your series of contributions to the Liberal Party dating back to 2004, do you not think that this is a bit of a blight in terms of accountability and your new post, given the fact that you’re not even from the Niagara region—that people may have a perception that all things are not copacetic?

Ms. Fay Booker: Deloitte would not have received that untendered contract during my tenure because the LHINs were not in existence when I left the firm at Deloitte, so I’m not privy to that. With respect to Grant Thornton receiving untendered contracts, I’m not privy to those either. I left the firm in 2004. I’m not sure when those contracts were given.

I know that in all the work that I have done, I have provided proposals and have gone through a proposal process. It has always been transparent to me.

One of the pillars that we talk about—why I have my own consulting firm is so that I can promote good governance in the way I see it. Transparency and accountability, particularly in the public sector, are key to that.

When you look at accountability and transparency for the Niagara Parks Commission, I think one of the questions that I would have is—when I review the website and look for information on the performance of the Niagara Parks Commission, the most recent information is from 2006. I think there needs to be some review done about providing more current, transparent and timely information.

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: Okay, thanks. Mr. Chair, I do have a request. I have another appointment, and I would like to vote on this. I’m requesting at this point in time, when it goes to concurrence, a deferral until next week.

The Chair (Mr. Ernie Hardeman): Yes.

Mr. Michael A. Brown: Is that in order?

The Chair (Mr. Ernie Hardeman): Yes.

The third party: Mr. Hampton.

Mr. Howard Hampton: I have only a couple of questions. You’ve applied for a position on this commission, and this commission has some problems. Those problems have been discussed here at Queen’s Park. They’ve been the subject of review and work by the Integrity Commissioner, and God knows they’ve been in the media. You must have done some preparatory work.

What do you think the problem is with the Niagara Parks Commission?

Ms. Fay Booker: I do think there are some challenges that the Niagara Parks Commission faces. There certainly is a question around integrity at the Niagara Parks Commission because of the information that has been available in the public domain about how certain transactions have been handled.

I think it is important to look at the processes to see how the processes are being handled. Are they being handled in the most appropriate way, given that the public is of interest in what the Niagara Parks Commission is contributing to the province? There have been some issues around transactions handling.

I think the other challenge right now, when you look at the financial results, is that there has been a decline in the financial results, and that is another area that needs some review in terms of why there are some negative trends that are apparent there.

I think that one of the important objectives that I would have is to bring integrity back to the Niagara Parks Commission, to look at what the processes are that have been drawn into question and how we go about enacting processes that are appropriate for the scrutiny that should be brought to bear.

Mr. Howard Hampton: One of the issues—and Ms. MacLeod brought this up—that has, I think, dogged not only this organization but other government organizations is this penchant to award untendered contracts or, if not untendered contracts, to seek sole providers to the exclusion of other potential providers. How do you clean that up?

Ms. Fay Booker: I think one of the things to look at, first of all, is what framework has the board established around the policy for doing tendering? Has the commission set a clear-cut policy that the commission will tender contracts, whether those are revenue-generating or procurement contracts? So there should be a clear statement that we are going to tender contracts to gain the best advantage of the use of the funds from the Niagara Parks Commission. Are we truly going to be getting value for money?

0920

Mr. Howard Hampton: So in your mind—and to be fair, this has generated a fair amount of controversy in and around Niagara Falls and the Niagara peninsula—is the government not able to find anybody competent in the Niagara Falls or Niagara region to do this job?

Ms. Fay Booker: The way I look at it, the Niagara Parks Commission is a provincial asset. When you look at the history of the commissioners, there have been commissioners over the years who have not been from Niagara region. I do value the Niagara region, as a citizen of this province; I do value the Niagara Parks Commission, as someone who has benefited from all that Niagara parks offer to us, whether it’s a butterfly conservatory, the parks or historic sites. So I’m not sure that I am not qualified. I believe I bring the competencies that

are needed. I believe I bring the objectivity that's needed to do the job that the province needs to be done.

Mr. Howard Hampton: My question again: Do you believe there's nobody within the Niagara region who is competent to do this?

Ms. Fay Booker: I believe there was a posting. The position was well-known in the Niagara region, and that it was being posted. There was a process to go through, through the secretariat, which is the process that I went through. Someone from the Niagara region actually approached me to submit my application. So I thought it was quite a compliment that I would be approached by someone from the Niagara region to make sure that I applied, because he believed that I brought the skills and experience that was necessary.

Mr. Howard Hampton: Do you mind if I ask who approached you?

Ms. Fay Booker: It's an individual by the name of Doug Niven. He lives in the Niagara region and works in Burlington. He has seen my expertise and experience and skills on a board where he is a staff member. I'm on the board of that organization. He approached me and said, "You know, based on my observations of your ability, I really believe you should apply for this position that's available at the Niagara Parks Commission." He is a resident of Niagara.

Mr. Howard Hampton: No more questions.

The Chair (Mr. Ernie Hardeman): Thank you very much. Government side: Ms. Carroll.

Ms. M. Aileen Carroll: I'm just a little perplexed myself. From my perspective, I don't know why it would matter where you come from. It's obviously an issue for the third party, but for me, the government is looking for the very best person that they can find. A process was put in place and you were selected. But maybe I don't get it. I'm from Halifax and I'm an Ontario member of provincial Parliament. I'm sure glad that there wasn't a rule against that.

I think your background in governance is very important. Certainly, the matter of free golf has caught the media's attention for years. I don't like golf, so I never thought this was the major issue, but it seems to have indeed gotten a lot of attention.

You have addressed partly—and you may wish to address further—the matter of perks, and I'll leave that to you to do. My one question: Having been involved as well with many boards on the governance side, my issue or concern has been a need for renewal. Therefore, I think it's important in either the jobs we do or the job you may do, which is to address term of office. That was something, quite frankly, that as a minister I felt was important and was very involved in doing. So I would ask you just to enlighten us with your views on that matter.

Ms. Fay Booker: There are a couple of things that we have to take into account with respect to governance. When we look at governance, what we believe is very important is that a board be competent in fulfilling the duty that it has been charged with. What we look for is a

combination of process and people. With respect to the people on the board, what we're looking for is skills, experience and diversity, with diversity on three levels: diversity with respect to ethnicity, based on the organization that's being a steward; diversity with respect to geography, to bring views in terms of what might be appropriate elsewhere; and diversity of thinking. Diversity of thinking is enriched when you have and bring together people who come from different walks and different perspectives. That is what will provide the richness of the dialogue around the board table.

You should actually be looking for that different dimension that's being brought, and I believe that having someone who is knowledgeable and who is still understanding and appreciative of what Niagara Parks brings to the province—where the person lives is not the prime determinant; it is more about what they bring in terms of talent.

With respect to tenure, I agree: One of the things that is important is that you balance the continuity of your board members with board renewal. You would not want to see an entire turnover of your board, but you should have a balance of some of the board members turning over while you maintain continuity of some. That provides for effectiveness in your board so that you have some corporate memory in terms of why the board has put certain motions in place or certain policies in place, but at the same time, you bring new thoughts to bear on whether those policies and processes are appropriate going forward.

Your question around perks: I have never been one to take advantage of perks. That's not what I am about. I am here to do as I was raised to do on the farm, which is a good job. You're given a job to do and it's your responsibility to fill that job. It is not about the pastime.

The Chair (Mr. Ernie Hardeman): Ms. Cansfield.

Mrs. Donna H. Cansfield: I just have one question. I think everybody here around the table has acknowledged that there are some challenges with the commission and its process about openness, transparency, accountability and whatever. One of KPMG's suggestions is that there be an annual board evaluation by a third party on accountability, presumably, and transparency. I was curious as to how you might undertake both that annual approach for third party evaluations, but also an internal evaluation around a summative, formative process, whereby you sit down with board members and say, "You haven't been doing your job. It's not working"—because "style difference" has been identified as a real challenge. So you could change processes from here to tomorrow, but unless you deal with that human issue, it's not going—so I'm just curious as to your approach.

Ms. Fay Booker: Yes, and I do go in and do governance reviews as an external assessor.

One of the style differences can be a result of not having an agreed-upon job description. What is the position description of the board first, and is it the job that the organization requires? Because the board is there to serve the organization; the organization is not there to serve the

board. Looking at the organization and then looking at the terms of reference for the board, do the terms of reference cover the right expectations of the board?

Then, is there a job description for a director? That's a missing piece that we often see. We're not articulating what the job of a director is. Once you have that job description for a director, you can now hold someone accountable to performing that job. The absence of a job description allows different styles, different thoughts to come in terms of what the job entails. Without a job description, people will create what that is. So what I would look for first is, have we got the appropriate terms of reference for the board; and then, do we have the right job description for a director? Do we have the appropriate job description for the chair of the board? Do we have the right board committees? And do we have the right terms of reference for the board committees—all for the purpose of bringing that accountability and serving the organization.

Mrs. Donna H. Cansfield: Thank you very much.

The Chair (Mr. Ernie Hardeman): That concludes the time for the questions. Thank you very much for coming forward this morning and for enlightening us on your appointment. We wish you well.

Ms. Fay Booker: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

0930

DR. COLIN GERMOND

Review of intended appointment, selected by official opposition party: Colin Germond, intended appointee as member, North East Local Health Integration Network.

The Chair (Mr. Ernie Hardeman): Our second interview is with Dr. Colin Germond, the intended appointee as a member of the North East Local Health Integration Network. Dr. Germond, come forward. First of all, thank you very much for coming in this morning for this interview. As we did with the previous attendee, we will provide you with an opportunity to make an opening statement, if you wish to do that. We will then have 10 minutes for each party to ask you any questions they may have from your presentation—we will be starting this round with the third party.

With that, we'll turn the floor over to you to make your presentation.

Dr. Colin Germond: Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman, and thank you to the members of the committee for the opportunity to present myself here.

As you see from my application, I'm a medical oncologist by training. I moved to Sudbury and began working there in 1989. The following year, I was asked to become acting head of the department of medical oncology, and the year after that, I was appointed as head and remained in that position for the remainder of my career.

At the time I started, the head of medical oncology had responsibility for the budget for the systemic therapy program. Eventually that responsibility was transferred to administrators, which was a considerable relief to us. I

continued to have responsibility for supervision of the physicians, particularly the quality of care that was delivered, as well as for planning for the delivery of care to the region.

Now, the cancer centre has always had a regional mandate, and the region in question was the entire northeast Ontario with the exception of Algoma, which had its own cancer program, and the James Bay coast, which referred to Kingston.

Our mantra was to try to deliver care as close to home as possible, and so one of the factors in health care that I'm very familiar with is the challenge of delivering care to a relatively small population scattered over a very large area. I think that experience is probably generalizable to other areas of health care, and I hope it is something that will be of use to the board.

Over the years, I have learned other things. First of all, from managing a group of physicians, I think I have been able to refine my negotiating skills, particularly the gentle art of compromise; it's a bit like herding cats, in a way. The other thing I have learned as a practising oncologist is the ability to explain relatively complicated subjects so that people can understand relatively easily. Again, I hope those are skills that will be of value to the board.

I want to say just a word about why I sought this appointment. I had been very involved as a volunteer when I was a medical student in South Africa. I have not been very involved in community activity in Canada, and when I quit working last year, I was very conscious of the fact that I had enjoyed a very good life in Sudbury and felt that perhaps I had not given enough back to the community. So, when a friend asked me to consider putting my name forward for this board, I thought this was an opportunity to give back to the community using the skills I believe I have. That is why I applied, and that's why I'm here before you today.

The Chair (Mr. Ernie Hardeman): Thank you very much for your presentation. As I said earlier, we will start with Mr. Hampton.

Mr. Howard Hampton: There's been a lot of controversy about LHINs. Whether you're part of the North West LHIN or the North East LHIN or the Niagara region LHIN, there's been a fair bit of controversy about LHINs and the work they do etc.

You're a medical specialist. How do you feel your knowledge, your work, your experience as a medical specialist will make a difference in terms of the decisions and operations of the LHINs; specifically, the North East LHIN?

Dr. Colin Germond: Well, the one thing that I learned that I think will be of value is the challenges of this vast area that the North East LHIN is responsible for and the challenge of not having sufficient population in many areas to support the kind of infrastructure that's necessary. It seems to me that many of the challenges that we're facing in the northeast—for example, the problem with the ALC occupancy of the Sudbury Regional Hospital are a result of not having the infrastructure to

allow those patients to be absorbed into the community. I think that's the kind of problem that one sees in many areas.

A small population doesn't allow for the same degree of infrastructure that you have when you have a denser population. We were very conscious of that because of our attempt to provide chemotherapy for patients as close to home as possible. Over the years, we saw a huge change in the types of chemotherapy that we delivered. We went from delivering relatively high-volume, very simple chemotherapy to delivering much lower-volume, higher-intensity treatment. As a consequence, smaller communities couldn't keep up the level of expertise that we demanded of them. It was an understanding of those challenges, and communities feel very strongly about what they have. When we had to say to them, "We don't believe it's safe for you to do this any longer," they were very upset, and rightly so, because we'd come to them and said, "We really think you can do this" under different circumstances earlier on.

I'm hoping that that kind of knowledge about the challenges of the type of population distribution we have in the northeast will be helpful.

Mr. Howard Hampton: In my part of the province there is much criticism of the LHINs, that they're not so much making health care decisions as they are making political decisions. In other words, health needs seem to take second place to decisions that might generate, from one day to the next, good headlines for the government. I think there's no denying that LHINs, because they're not representative of the general public—they're not being elected by the people or appointed by the people, you're essentially being appointed by the Premier's office. How do you deal with that?

Dr. Colin Germond: I think it's definitely a challenge. I think part of the problem, though, is that there's probably not a very good understanding of what the LHIN is actually responsible for. Certainly, when I came to read up a bit about it, I found that what I'd thought they were responsible for is not actually entirely the case. So I think there's a perception problem and that the LHIN doesn't perhaps have the profile that is necessary. Most people don't know what the LHIN is there for, so it could well be that the LHIN is perceived as being purely political; whereas, in fact its real role may be somewhat different. I think that is a challenge for the LHIN, to make itself more visible and make it clearer what it's supposed to be doing.

Mr. Howard Hampton: Let's go back to your first answer. Communities in my part of the province are, if I can use the term, supposed to be served by the North West LHIN. The perception is that the LHIN is, in fact, taking health care services out of smaller communities and centralizing them in one larger community. In other words, the LHIN is either reducing, cutting or removing health care services out of communities that have struggled and worked very hard over the years, in many cases done their own fundraising, financed their own capital equipment, and now the LHIN is telling them,

"No, no. If you want this service, you have to go to Thunder Bay." How do you, as a medical professional who has a professional duty to ensure people receive appropriate medical service, deal with those kinds of decisions?

0940

Dr. Colin Germond: It's a very difficult question, because what you say is absolutely true: Communities go to great lengths to try to improve the infrastructure that they have. But it may still happen that the most prudent decision is not to deliver the service in a particular community.

I alluded to the difficult decisions that we had to make with giving chemotherapy, which is a fairly simple example in the sense of, "How bad can it be to go down to Sudbury or Timmins to get your chemotherapy once every two weeks?" The answer is, from the patient's point of view, that it seems unreasonable; it seems unfair: "Why can't I get it at home? They give other types of chemotherapy here." So I think there are always two sides to that story, and sometimes it's not always in the best interests of the community.

One could take an example. For example, in Sudbury, we have patients with certain types of cancer diagnoses where we don't have the necessary resources to treat those patients adequately. We have to send them to Toronto. Again, the perception is, "You can do that type of surgery. You can do that type of radiation. You can give that chemotherapy. What's the problem?" The problem is that we don't have the volume of patients to maintain the expertise to do it. It's safer and more sensible to send people where there's a concentration of that type of talent.

So I think there are always two ways of looking at it. I can't say that each individual physician is right or wrong, but there are always these two ways of looking at it.

Mr. Howard Hampton: No further questions.

The Chair (Mr. Ernie Hardeman): Thank you very much. Ms. Cansfield?

Mrs. Donna H. Cansfield: I'd just like to say thank you for putting your name forward, and thank you for thinking about volunteering in your community. If you'd like to move to Etobicoke, I have four LHINs. I'd be thrilled to have you.

I'm being a bit facetious, but thank you again for putting your name forward.

The Chair (Mr. Ernie Hardeman): Thank you very much, and—

Interjection.

The Chair (Mr. Ernie Hardeman): Oh, you have more? Okay. Mr. Brown.

Mr. Michael A. Brown: I want to say thank you too. I represent the huge riding of Algoma-Manitoulin: Manitoulin Island and everything west of you to Sault Ste Marie, and then around Sault Ste. Marie to Hornepayne and Manitowadge in the North West LHIN. I recognize the challenge of providing services.

I look at your qualifications at the oncology centre in Sudbury and recognize that the people I serve in the rural

areas rely so much on the expertise that you've gained, not only in treatment and looking after their individual needs but in making sure that, in some cases, the treatment is available at their local hospital. So I think that's the kind of expertise we need in the thousands upon thousands of square kilometres where we try to do this.

Maybe you can elaborate a little bit on how you've done outreach into the communities in your former position?

Dr. Colin Germond: In most cases, it was very easy to do, in a sense, because communities were very keen to take this on, initially. There are a number of reasons why, apart from the obvious one: that you'd better think seriously about cancer, since 25% of people are going to die of it. So you want in your community the services that you may one day require yourself. I can speak from personal experience on that.

Communities were very keen to set up satellite clinics where chemotherapy could be delivered. One of the little perks was that raising money for cancer care delivery is generally easier than in any other area of medicine. So to have a satellite cancer clinic was very beneficial for these communities in terms of fundraising and profile. The patients really liked it. And from our point of view it was particularly helpful, because the nurses who would run these satellites became very, very skilled, and they served as sort of deputies of ours in those communities. They were a link to us. They were a resource to the patients. It was a very easy sell.

What was very difficult was having to tell them that we didn't feel it was appropriate for them to continue that any longer. We had some come to us and plead the case, and when we explained the rationale, they were comfortable with it, but they were never happy.

Mr. Michael A. Brown: I think that your expertise in that area is very transferable to the North East LHIN in that what you have seen done with cancer care is also done pretty reasonably and very well in cardiology, for example. We have cardiologists in many of our hospitals visiting from Sudbury and other places.

I just want to commend you again for putting your name forward. This is an important public service. It puts a person who has been a front-line provider with people with various other expertise. Thank you for putting your name forward. We will clearly be supporting your nomination.

The Chair (Mr. Ernie Hardeman): Thank you very much. The opposition: Mr. Wilson.

Mr. Jim Wilson: Thank you, Dr. Germond, for putting your name forward. I served for a little under three years during the time you were head of the department up there. I want to thank you for being one of the few groups of doctors, under your leadership, that didn't go on strike during my time as Minister of Health, or otherwise hate me.

You did a good job. You, of course, were there when the cancer centre was being built and Cancer Care Ontario was being introduced. Congratulations for all that. As Mr. Hampton has said, given the controversy

around LHINs, the uncertainty of their future, the perception that they do the government's dirty work and that when there's good-news announcements, like \$15 million for the Grace during a by-election, the government makes the good news and makes the LHINs do their dirty work, why do you want to potentially ruin your good reputation by joining this gang of thieves?

Laughter.

Mr. Jim Wilson: It's a bit of a set-up there, Doctor.

Dr. Colin Germond: I hope I'm remembered for what I did.

The Chair (Mr. Ernie Hardeman): And you thought there would be no difficult questions.

Dr. Colin Germond: Yes, that's right.

I think that the LHIN is important. If that's the way that health care has to be delivered, then it's important that it's run as well as it possibly can be. If I can contribute to making it run better, then that will be worthwhile.

Mr. Jim Wilson: You mentioned too many ALC patients in the Sudbury area; in the northeast, we have that. It's particularly acute in your area. You've got an older population; you've got a population for which, generally, the health indicators aren't as good as the average across the province, whether it's smoking, drinking, obesity or whatever—a real challenge. But the LHINs haven't been, and they're not set up to be, a lobbying group for the local area. Don't you think that—for instance, with your reputation, I'm sure if you just went to the local editorial board, even as a retired physician, you'd probably get far more bang and influence on the government than becoming a member of the LHIN. Do you have any thoughts on that?

Dr. Colin Germond: I think you're probably right about that, but it's probably not appropriate for people to be sort of Don Quixotes, sort of tilting at windmills on their own. There's a process for trying to affect change. Maybe it's not always the easiest way to do it, but if that's the appropriate way to do it, I think that should be supported rather than saying, "Well, I'm going to champion this particular cause."

Just with regard to that particular point, I asked one of the members of the LHIN—not of the board, but one of the workers in the LHIN—what their role had been in trying to secure the ALC beds at Memorial. Her reply was that they're not in a position to lobby, which is fair enough, but they were present at the discussions that the physician group had initiated and did try to give as much support as they could to moving the process along. Is that the best way that the LHIN could have operated? I'm not sure. Maybe there's room to be more proactive, more effective. I couldn't say for sure. Obviously, I'm not in a position yet to say.

0950

Mr. Jim Wilson: I appreciate that, and I appreciate your response.

One of the controversies we're dealing with in the House around the budget bill now is schedule 12, which cancels the legislative review of the LHINs. We've not

been given any reason why—in spite of a lot of questions in question period and in other forums—the government is not moving ahead with what, in many ways, could be beneficial to the LHINs and to the government if it was handled properly. They're cancelling the legislative review, breaking the law. Do you have any comments on that?

Dr. Colin Germond: I didn't know about that.

Mr. Jim Wilson: It was 2010—when the LHIN law was first brought in, there was a sunset clause and a comprehensive review so that if it couldn't justify itself, we would scrap them. That could be one of the outcomes. Tucked neatly into the budget bill, the one that was just tabled—as a result of last month's budget, the government is getting rid of the review. It just won't happen this year. Well, if you didn't know about it, good answer.

If, by some means, you came across the knowledge of untendered contracts at your LHIN, what would you think you should do about that?

Dr. Colin Germond: I think it's completely unacceptable. When we look at the mess at eHealth, which is something I'm particularly upset about because—it always bothered me, for example, that I could say to a patient, "What medications are you on?" and the patient's pharmacist would know, but I wasn't in a position to know. So eHealth was something that I was really looking forward to seeing move along. When you look at the debacle there, untendered contracts are clearly not the way to go.

Mr. Jim Wilson: Thank you for your responses.

Because Ms. MacLeod is unable to be here, we're going to ask for a deferral on this appointment, too.

The Chair (Mr. Ernie Hardeman): Thank you very much for your presentation and your presence here this morning. We will be dealing with your appointment following your interview. We do wish you well in future endeavours.

Dr. Colin Germond: Thank you very much.

The Chair (Mr. Ernie Hardeman): That concludes our interviews this morning, so we will start with the concurrences. We do have a request to defer consideration of concurrence on our first interview. According to the standing orders, they have the right to request that. The timing of it is not part of it; I just want to make sure we all understand that. It can be requested, and if you request to defer consideration, there is no further consideration until that deferral takes place. Anyone has the ability to ask for that.

We will just deal with the concurrence on Dr. Germond.

Ms. M. Aileen Carroll: May I ask a question?

The Chair (Mr. Ernie Hardeman): Yes.

Ms. M. Aileen Carroll: Just as a new member—so concurrence means that the decision is put off a week, and then—

The Chair (Mr. Ernie Hardeman): Deferral of consideration. We'll give no further consideration to the application until next week.

Ms. M. Aileen Carroll: So what happens next week? Do we have a discussion? Do they bring the people back?

Mr. Jim Wilson: No. We just have a vote

Ms. M. Aileen Carroll: So we have the vote then instead of today?

The Chair (Mr. Ernie Hardeman): Next week, there could be a discussion, as there is the opportunity to have a discussion on any concurrence that is conducted in this meeting. What is being deferred is the total consideration of the concurrence.

Ms. M. Aileen Carroll: Thank you, Chair.

Mr. Jim Wilson: On a point of order, Mr. Chairman: I'm not sure if you heard me. I also asked for a deferral on the second nominee, Dr. Germond.

The Chair (Mr. Ernie Hardeman): I didn't hear it for the second one. Obviously, if you are asking for a deferral of concurrence on the second one, that will be treated in exactly the same manner, then. We will deal with both of those considerations of concurrence at our next meeting.

This brings us to the timing of our next meeting, which is at 9 a.m. on Tuesday, April 20.

Before we make that final, is there any further discussion or anything you would add for the betterment of this committee's deliberations before we adjourn?

Mr. Jim Wilson: Mr. Chairman, what is the agenda for the next meeting?

The Chair (Mr. Ernie Hardeman): It will be intended appointees. We do have a report, but we have not yet had the opportunity to get the staff together to talk about the committee process and how we'll proceed with our reviews of agencies. Hopefully we'll have that to discuss at the next meeting.

Mr. Jim Wilson: Thank you.

The Chair (Mr. Ernie Hardeman): Is there any other business that the committee wishes to discuss? If not, we'll adjourn till 9 o'clock on April 20.

The committee adjourned at 0956.

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