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## **Official Report of Debates (Hansard)**

**Tuesday 5 October 2010**

## **Journal des débats (Hansard)**

**Mardi 5 octobre 2010**

**Standing Committee on  
Government Agencies**

Intended appointments

**Comité permanent des  
organismes gouvernementaux**

Nominations prévues

Chair: Ernie Hardeman  
Clerk: Katch Koch

Président : Ernie Hardeman  
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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

## STANDING COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT AGENCIES

## COMITÉ PERMANENT DES ORGANISMES GOUVERNEMENTAUX

Tuesday 5 October 2010

Mardi 5 octobre 2010

*The committee met at 0903 in committee room 1.*

**The Chair (Mr. Ernie Hardeman):** I call the meeting of the Standing Committee on Government Agencies to order for Tuesday, October 5. We have no subcommittee reports today, so we will go directly into the intended appointee reviews.

### INTENDED APPOINTMENTS

#### MR. MANJIT BASI

Review of intended appointment, selected by official opposition party: Manjit Basi, intended appointee as member, Waterloo Wellington Local Health Integration Network.

**The Chair (Mr. Ernie Hardeman):** Our first interview today is with Manjit Basi, intended appointee as a member of the Waterloo Wellington Local Health Integration Network. Welcome to our committee this morning. Thank you very much for coming in and thank you for applying to be appointed and help the government out on the local integrated health network. We will—

**Ms. Manjit Basi:** I'm sitting in the wrong chair.

**The Chair (Mr. Ernie Hardeman):** That's fine. It doesn't make any difference which chair. We will turn the light on at whichever chair you sit.

**Ms. Manjit Basi:** They're all electric chairs, are they?

**The Chair (Mr. Ernie Hardeman):** Very good.

As normal practice, we will allow you to make an opening statement, if you wish. Upon that, we will start with each party having 10 minutes to question you on your presentation or on any other issue they may wish to ask about. This time we will start the questioning with the third party. Of course, that changes if the third party is not ready to do that.

Thank you again for coming in, and the floor is yours.

**Ms. Manjit Basi:** Members of the committee, thank you for giving me this opportunity to speak to you today about my potential appointment to the Waterloo Wellington LHIN.

I have been a community council member of the Waterloo Wellington LHIN board for the past three years. As a community council member, our mandate is to be the eyes and the ears of the Waterloo-Wellington community and to bring forward comments, concerns

and issues that may arise from the general public regarding health services.

The community council is considered by the LHIN to be an important asset and integral to their community engagement framework. In April 2009, I was interviewed by the nominating committee of the Waterloo Wellington LHIN board for an upcoming board vacancy. The outcome of that rigorous interview process brings me here today. I would like to personalize my resumé and expand on those skills that make me a valued addition to the Waterloo Wellington LHIN board.

My professional background is in business administration. I began my career as an office manager for the British Waterways Board and Pointbid PLC in England. Both are large multinational warehousing and distribution companies.

Since moving to the Waterloo region, I have been working as the office administrator with Gomahar Consulting Inc., an energy consulting company, and am presently employed with PEACE Environmental, an environmental consulting firm. The scope of my experience with these companies involves finance, operations, human resources and sourcing new opportunities in the present economic climate.

I also have experience as a human resources officer in the Cambridge riding for the past three elections with Elections Canada and Elections Ontario. This is a non-partisan and impartial position which involves working in a time-intensive environment to ensure hiring and training of approximately 685 officials so that election day proceeds smoothly.

As a resident of Cambridge, I have been involved with numerous volunteer associations, including school council, sports travel teams and Heritage Cambridge, and recently with issues related to bringing awareness to the environmentally sensitive farmlands. As a member of the Sikh community in Cambridge, I also, when called upon, will take seniors to doctors' appointments and hospital appointments. Also, as a Canadian citizen, I recognize my obligation to be actively involved in the democratic process. My involvement with the Liberal associations has given me the opportunity to engage various ethnic communities in the political process in Cambridge.

Through my church and because of my ability to speak three languages, I have been involved with many multicultural groups. This affords me the opportunity to interact and use my skills to help the community navigate

existing health services. This is most especially important for our elderly community. As a result, I have first-hand knowledge of the needs and gaps which exist within Waterloo-Wellington for people of different ethnic backgrounds.

The Waterloo Wellington LHIN plans, integrates and allocates funds for 79 health service partners, and serves approximately 750,000 people. A growing number of these residents come from different ethnic communities. I believe in fairness and inclusivity for all.

Through my network of communities, I am well known, trusted and approachable. I listen well and I'm not afraid to ask focused, probing questions. I see life as a process of continuous growth and learning. I believe in being involved and giving back to one's community. I am hard-working, have a strong work ethic and a great deal of energy. I'm disciplined, well organized and focused. I enjoy new challenges and new opportunities.

**0910**

I believe I will be a positive asset to the Waterloo-Wellington board and will be able to bring forward a voice of diversity for the citizens of Waterloo-Wellington.

**The Chair (Mr. Ernie Hardeman):** Thank you very much. As I said, we may have to change who we're going to start with. We'll go to the government benches first. Mr. Brown.

**Mr. Michael A. Brown:** Thank you for coming, and thank you for putting your name forward. The government believes that you will be an excellent member of the LHIN. We believe that we need community involvement in deciding health policy and that it's better made out in the communities than it is here at Queen's Park. Thank you for doing this important work.

**The Chair (Mr. Ernie Hardeman):** From the opposition, Mr. Wilson.

**Mr. Jim Wilson:** Thank you for coming in this morning.

A political question: Are you still active with the local Liberal riding association?

**Ms. Manjit Basi:** I resigned from the provincials simply because I had so much work on my hands at the moment.

**Mr. Jim Wilson:** You've donated to the Liberal Party in the past?

**Ms. Manjit Basi:** Probably in hours and not in too much money.

**Mr. Jim Wilson:** The records indicate that you've actually given quite a bit of money to the party. Are those just conventions you went to or something like that?

**Ms. Manjit Basi:** I'd like to clarify something: There are two Manjit Basis. There's another Manjit Basi from Ottawa who donates quite heavily.

**Mr. Michael A. Brown:** We love that guy.

**Mr. Jim Wilson:** Yes. He's not here.

**Ms. Manjit Basi:** We donate, but I don't think I donate heavily.

**Mr. Jim Wilson:** But you are in the Cambridge riding?

**Ms. Manjit Basi:** I am in the Cambridge riding.

**Mr. Jim Wilson:** I just wondered. The reason I said it was a political question is because this is a non-partisan position. You've given money in 2004, twice in 2005, 2006, 2007—how do you end up in a non-partisan position at Elections Ontario and Elections Canada? If that was my riding, they'd freak right out.

**Ms. Manjit Basi:** I think I've proven myself, that you can leave your politics at the door and work in a non-partisan way.

**Mr. Jim Wilson:** Just for the record, it's unusual.

You were three years on the advisory board?

**Ms. Manjit Basi:** Three years as a volunteer on the community council.

**Mr. Jim Wilson:** Did anyone on that advisory board speak out? This is our greatest-sinning LHIN—the Waterloo-Wellington LHIN—when it comes to per diems and the number of days. The board chair has charged some \$81,900 per diem compensation in one year for a part-time job. Did anybody on the community board speak out?

**Ms. Manjit Basi:** I never heard of anybody saying anything to that effect.

**Mr. Jim Wilson:** Okay. That's all the questions I have.

**The Chair (Mr. Ernie Hardeman):** Thank you very much for making your presentation. We will make a decision on the concurrence to your appointment at the end of our interviews this morning. Again, thank you very much for coming in. We wish you well in your future endeavours.

**Ms. Manjit Basi:** Thank you for giving me this opportunity. I'm very passionate about what I do with the LHINs.

#### MR. MIKE LOWTHER

Review of intended appointment, selected by official opposition party: Mike Lowther, intended appointee as member, Erie St. Clair Local Health Integration Network.

**The Chair (Mr. Ernie Hardeman):** Our second appointee we are interviewing this morning is Mike Lowther.

As with the previous delegation, we will provide you with an opportunity to make an opening statement, if you so wish. We will then have 10 minutes for each party to ask any questions they may have about your presentation or anything else, if they desire to do so.

Thank you for coming in. We will start the round of questioning this time with the government side. With that, the floor is yours. We look forward to hearing from you.

**Mr. Mike Lowther:** Thank you to the members of the committee for the opportunity to present this morning.

As you can see from my application, I am a certified management accountant and I have a bachelor of mathematics degree from the University of Waterloo. I am the controller and CFO of a multi-million dollar petroleum distribution company.

During my career, I've worked for family-run businesses, a public accounting firm and international corporations. I've had the responsibility for financial departments, human resource functions and been the general manager of manufacturing facilities. I've been a member of many executive teams. These operations have been in both union and non-union environments.

I've lived in Georgia for a three-year period. During time I experienced their health care system and did not like what I found.

I believe in the importance of volunteer service and giving back to one's community. Having served on various boards in the Chatham-Kent area, I've developed an understanding of how decisions by committee works. I volunteered for girls' minor softball, junior achievement, Kiwanis, parks and recreation advisory boards, Chatham-Kent Crime Stoppers and our local high school parent council.

My wife and I were born and raised in Chatham and currently reside there with our youngest daughter. We have one daughter currently working on her master's at the University of Western Ontario and our oldest daughter lives in Atlanta, Georgia, with her husband. My parents and our extended family also live in Chatham.

Based on my education, business experience, community involvement and deep ties to the community and desire to have a continuously improving health care system, I believe I can be a strong asset to the community as a member of the Erie St. Clair LHIN. Thank you for your time.

**The Chair (Mr. Ernie Hardeman):** Thank you very much for your presentation. We will go to the government benches. Mr. Brown.

**Mr. Michael A. Brown:** Thank you for putting your name forward for this important position. I'm not going to have much to say. You're obviously very well-qualified for this position, and the government will be supporting your appointment.

**The Chair (Mr. Ernie Hardeman):** To the official opposition. Mr. Wilson.

**Mr. Jim Wilson:** Thank you, Mr. Lowther, for coming in this morning. You haven't quite donated as much as the previous witness to the Liberal Party, but you're on the list. Will that in any way effect your performance at the LHIN?

**Mr. Mike Lowther:** I'm not sure how I'm on a list for donating to the Liberal Party. I have never donated to politics.

**Mr. Jim Wilson:** Oh, okay. You're not Lowther Consultants Ltd. then, eh?

**Mr. Mike Lowther:** No.

**Mr. Jim Wilson:** Oh, okay. It's good to correct the record.

Would you like to donate to the PC Party?

*Interjections.*

**Mr. Jim Wilson:** You are well-qualified in terms of community involvement and that, but have you done anything in the health care volunteer side or are you familiar with health care at all?

**Mr. Mike Lowther:** Other than using the health care system and knowing what my parents ran into with doctors not being available in Chatham, and my kids using it, that's the only involvement. Fortunately, it hasn't been an extensive involvement. I think mainly my desire is that there's not a lot known about the Erie St. Clair LHIN in the community and that's one of the issues out there.

**Mr. Jim Wilson:** Well, that's what I'm going to ask you. What are some of the challenges that you think have to be tackled?

**Mr. Mike Lowther:** I think getting the community on side. It's a very spread-out community from Sarnia down to Windsor through Chatham-Kent. There's a lack of trust, and I think that we need to get people involved who maybe haven't had anything to do with the health care system and bring another look at it, and get the community to understand what's going on. Whether they agree with LHINs or not, that's not the issue at this point—they're there. We need to work with them and make sure they're working properly and openly.

**Mr. Jim Wilson:** And what made you seek this appointment?

**Mr. Mike Lowther:** Talking with a few people and what I could see in the area. Like I said, there's just not a lot of knowledge in the area of the LHIN and there's a lot of distrust. I wanted to put my name forward, being involved with other areas, to see what I could do to help.

**Mr. Jim Wilson:** Okay. Thank you.

**The Chair (Mr. Ernie Hardeman):** Thank you very much for coming in this morning and making the presentation. We do apologize again for soliciting funds during a meeting—

**Mr. Michael A. Brown:** Is it for a particular riding association, Jim?

**Mr. Jim Wilson:** We're getting desperate.

**The Chair (Mr. Ernie Hardeman):** The Chair doesn't have the ability to tell the members what they can ask, so we apologize, as far as the Chair is concerned.

*Interjections.*

**The Chair (Mr. Ernie Hardeman):** We will deal with the concurrence issue upon the completion of our interviews this morning. We thank you very much and we wish you well in your future endeavours.

**Mr. Mike Lowther:** Thank you.

**The Chair (Mr. Ernie Hardeman):** Now, I'm at your wishes. Our next delegation just called. He's stuck in traffic and he will not be here before 10 o'clock.

**Mrs. Donna H. Cansfield:** Why don't we recess?

**The Chair (Mr. Ernie Hardeman):** Okay. With that, we'll recess till 10 o'clock and hopefully we'll be here at 10.

*The committee recessed from 0918 to 1007.*

**The Chair (Mr. Ernie Hardeman):** We'll call the meeting to order and we can, while we're waiting for the delegation to come forward, do the concurrences on the two that we did this morning, if I can just find them here.

We'll proceed with the concurrences. We'll first consider the intended appointee Manjit Basi as a member

of the Waterloo Wellington Local Health Integration Network. Do we have a motion?

**Mr. Michael A. Brown:** Chair, I move concurrence in the appointment of Manjit Basi to the Waterloo Wellington Local Health Integration Network. Recorded vote.

**The Chair (Mr. Ernie Hardeman):** We've heard the motion. Discussion? If not, all those in favour?

**Ayes**

Brown, Cansfield, Carroll, Crozier, Pendergast.

**Nays**

Wilson.

**The Chair (Mr. Ernie Hardeman):** The motion's carried.

Our second concurrence is the appointment of Mike Lowther as a member of the Erie St. Clair Local Health Integration Network. Do we have a motion for concurrence?

**Mr. Michael A. Brown:** Mr. Chair, I move concurrence in the appointment of Mike Lowther to the Erie St. Clair Local Health Integration Network. Recorded vote.

**The Chair (Mr. Ernie Hardeman):** You've heard the motion. Discussion? There being none, all those in favour?

**Ayes**

Brown, Cansfield, Carroll, Crozier, Pendergast.

**Nays**

Wilson.

**The Chair (Mr. Ernie Hardeman):** The motion is carried.

That concludes the concurrences thus far, though we will have to just—what do they say?—sit tight for a few moments.

*The committee recessed from 1009 to 1010.*

**MR. KENNETH TOPPING**

Review of intended appointment, selected by official opposition party: Kenneth Topping, intended appointee as member, Central West Local Health Integration Network.

**The Chair (Mr. Ernie Hardeman):** It would appear that Kenneth Topping has arrived. If we could ask him to come forward. Rather than have to sit down and get up, you can sit down right at the end of the table. We thank you very much for coming in and we apologize for not being able to clear the parade route for your arrival quite as well as we had hoped. But we do thank you for coming in this morning.

As we do with all the delegations, we'll provide you with an opportunity to make an opening statement, if you wish. Upon the conclusion of that statement, we will have some time for questions from each of the three parties. This time, I think we will start with the official opposition.

The floor is yours, Kenneth, for your presentation.

**Mr. Kenneth Topping:** Thank you very much. As I was driving in this morning, I thought I should be applying for some kind of committee on transportation. I've been on the road for just over three hours to get from Shelburne, Ontario, which is usually an hour-and-a-half kind of event.

Because of the short time or my being late, whichever way you look at it, I'll dispense with making a major comment to you. I would just like to say that I'm quite interested in this appointment. Specifically, I'm interested in this appointment because of my experience in the past few years. In the past few years, I've had the wonderful opportunity of sharing the care of a senior, who has now passed, and through the care of that senior—my father-in-law—I saw a number of wonderful things about the health system in Ontario. It certainly was a challenge with his many difficulties, but I was very glad, as we went through that, that we do live in the province of Ontario, and for what it provided. I had a number of experiences with hospitals, both in our LHIN and all across southern Ontario, because of this man.

I am a bit of a cheerleader for the health system. For the past 25 years, I have been dealing with serious health issues myself. I sit here this morning pretty happy, pretty healthy and pretty fit because of the good work of our health system. Just in the past year or so I didn't know much about the LHIN, but we had a hospital closure in Shelburne, and I saw some wonderful things happen out of that closure.

Last winter the LHIN formed the Shelburne health task force, and I applied to be on it. I brought to that committee the same thing I think I bring here this morning: a huge experience as a community participant with service clubs, sports, and as an educator in all my career. In that kind of area, I bring a huge community experience to the committee.

I sat on that task force with that in mind, representing the community and, I guess more particularly, representing service clubs. As you know, even in small communities service clubs contribute a huge amount to hospitals and other health organizations.

I was really impressed by what happened with that committee, the way they sought the opinions of the public, the information they brought to the public, the way the meetings were conducted, the way they were publicized and reported in the newspaper. I thought it was a very good process, and I think the result is something that was true to the process and will be very worthwhile as it evolves for the health care of the people in northern Dufferin or in Dufferin county, really, which is basically the northern half of the LHIN that I'm interested in.

On the people point of view, the people I met from the LHIN through that committee process seemed very interested in the people of our area. They were open to our suggestions. They treated us well. They listened to us, and they brought back wonderful suggestions. As I watched the chair of the committee, who was Terry Miller at that time, and Joe McReynolds, who's chair of the LHIN, and Mimi, who is our CEO, I thought that's a group of people who I think share the same view of the world that I do and I'd like to work with them. So, when an ad came in the paper early last winter, I applied. Thank you.

**The Chair (Mr. Ernie Hardeman):** Very good. Thank you very much for that presentation. We'll now start with the official opposition, Mr. Wilson.

**Mr. Jim Wilson:** Thank you, Mr. Topping, very much for coming in. I'm in opposition, so I agree with you about the traffic in this province. It's horrible and something needs to be done about it.

**Mrs. M. Aileen Carroll:** Among other things we discussed.

**Mr. Jim Wilson:** I've got the riding next door, as you know, Simcoe-Grey. You mentioned the facility in Shelburne. What do you see as the future of that facility?

**Mr. Kenneth Topping:** The future of the building I'm not sure about. That still seems to be up in the air.

The future related to health is that the Shelburne health task force has created a Shelburne health and care centre, and that centre is kicking into progress very quickly. They're in the process now of hiring a coordinator, and I believe a steering committee has been appointed from the health providers in the area. The ad for the coordinator was in the paper last week, so it's moving ahead. It will be situated to begin at Dufferin Oaks as a starting point. It has a \$500,000 start-up budget, so it's going.

The building, to me, has opportunity written all over it. It's a decent building. It was closed by the hospital not because it was a decrepit building. Studies on the building show that we can put it into usable shape in the shell that it's in for just over a million dollars, so it's a good opportunity to use the building. I'm not sure what it'll be used for. I hope that it becomes part of this health and care centre.

**Mr. Jim Wilson:** Yes, I think you're right. I think the committee did do a good job and the community has bought into the vision, and I wish it well. I'm glad you mentioned it.

You've told us your motivation. How many years were you with the school board?

**Mr. Kenneth Topping:** I spent most of my career in the Upper Grand and Dufferin school board. I retired in 1999 as a principal from a school in Orangeville. So I worked my whole career in education. The last 25 years—since 1974 I was in the Shelburne and Upper Grand area.

**Mr. Jim Wilson:** What will your priorities be when and if you join the LHIN board? We get outvoted every time, so when you join the LHIN board.

**Mr. Kenneth Topping:** Why did I join the LHIN? I joined the LHIN because of the background experience which I mentioned in meeting the folks from the LHIN. My priorities on working on it? I think I have two. One is to bring information and credibility about the north half of the LHIN to the table, and the other thing I have to do is learn about the south half of the LHIN.

I don't know much about that area south of Orangeville in terms of the population. I have an awareness of the health system through working with Dufferin County Community Support Services. I drive disabled and senior folks to appointments all over Ontario, starting in Dufferin, most of them within our LHIN. So I've got a pretty good idea of the health system in the south, but I don't know a lot about the population and the needs in the south.

**The Chair (Mr. Ernie Hardeman):** Thank you very much. On to the third party, Mr. Hampton.

**Mr. Howard Hampton:** So it's Dufferin County Community Support Services—

**Mr. Kenneth Topping:** Yes.

**Mr. Howard Hampton:** And that's what leads you into doing a lot of work with seniors?

**Mr. Kenneth Topping:** Yes. It started working with my own father-in-law, and seeing the needs that he had, I applied to work on a casual basis with Dufferin county support to help other seniors—which I should say right off the bat, if I'm successful today, will be a severe conflict of interest, so I'll be resigning from that position and hopefully will be helping seniors from the table rather than from the car.

**Mr. Howard Hampton:** When you say that part of your responsibility now is to take seniors to medical appointments and so on, where would you take them, in general? What locations would you usually be taking seniors to?

**Mr. Kenneth Topping:** Well, for example, tomorrow I'll be picking up a lady in Shelburne and taking her to a pain clinic in Mississauga. I think that's the only drive I have tomorrow. On Friday, I pick up a group of Alzheimer's patients in the surrounding area—Shelburne, Orangeville, Grand Valley—and I bring them to a day program in Orangeville, and then in the afternoon I pick them up again and take them home.

We do a lot of work with the Brampton hospital, but the way our organization works, I have driven people to virtually every hospital in the Toronto area as well to see specialists and that kind of thing. As long as they originate in Dufferin county, we take them where they need to go.

**Mr. Howard Hampton:** So, most often, Brampton, Mississauga, Toronto?

**Mr. Kenneth Topping:** Probably most often Orangeville, then second to that would be the big hospital in Brampton and third to that would be just down the road here to the group of hospitals. I come down here quite a bit.

**Mr. Howard Hampton:** The downtown Toronto hospitals?

**Mr. Kenneth Topping:** Yes. That's why I was so flummoxed today. I usually come down here in about an hour and a half and I couldn't find any of my usual routes that worked today.

**Mr. Howard Hampton:** We should be thankful it wasn't snowing. It probably would have been three and a half or four hours.

**Mr. Kenneth Topping:** Yes, we're in the land of snow and blow up there, for sure.

**Mr. Howard Hampton:** I have no further questions.

**The Chair (Mr. Ernie Hardeman):** Thank you very much. The government, Mr. Brown.

**Mr. Michael A. Brown:** Thank you, Mr. Topping, for putting your name forward and enduring the trip. We are very pleased you put your name in front of us. The government will be concurring in your appointment.

**Mr. Kenneth Topping:** Thank you.

**Mr. Michael A. Brown:** In that vein, Mr. Chair, I would like to move concurrence in the appointment of Kenneth Topping to the Central West Local Health Integration Network.

**The Chair (Mr. Ernie Hardeman):** Thank you very much. The motion has been put to concur with the appointment.

**Mr. Michael A. Brown:** A recorded vote.

**The Chair (Mr. Ernie Hardeman):** Further discussion on the concurrence? Seeing none, all those in favour?

#### Ayes

Brown, Cansfield, Carroll, Crozier, Pendergast.

**The Chair (Mr. Ernie Hardeman):** Opposed? The motion is carried.

So though you were somewhat delayed in your travelling, we made up for it in the time you had to spend in front of the committee. Thank you very much again for putting your name forward and coming in this morning and enlightening us on your endeavours. We do wish you well in all your future endeavours.

**Mr. Kenneth Topping:** Thank you very much.

**The Chair (Mr. Ernie Hardeman):** And keep up the good work. Thank you.

**Mr. Kenneth Topping:** Thanks a lot.

**The Chair (Mr. Ernie Hardeman):** With that, the next meeting of the committee will be at 9 a.m. on Tuesday, October 19, here in committee room 1. We're going to beat the bell.

The meeting is adjourned and we'll see you here on the 19th.

*The committee adjourned at 1021.*







## CONTENTS

Tuesday 5 October 2010

Intended appointments.....	A-85
Mr. Manjit Basi.....	A-85
Mr. Mike Lowther.....	A-86
Mr. Kenneth Topping.....	A-88

### STANDING COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT AGENCIES

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