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**Standing Committee on
Finance and Economic Affairs**

Subcommittee report

1st Session
42nd Parliament

Thursday 12 December 2019

**Comité permanent
des finances
et des affaires économiques**

Rapport du sous-comité

1^{re} session
42^e législature

Jeudi 12 décembre 2019

Chair: Amarjot Sandhu
Clerk: Julia Douglas

Président : Amarjot Sandhu
Greffière : Julia Douglas

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**STANDING COMMITTEE ON
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Thursday 12 December 2019

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

**COMITÉ PERMANENT DES FINANCES
ET DES AFFAIRES ÉCONOMIQUES**

Jeudi 12 décembre 2019

The committee met at 0903 in room 151.

SUBCOMMITTEE REPORT

The Chair (Mr. Amarjot Sandhu): Good morning, everyone. I would like to call the Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs to order. At this time, we are here to receive the report of the subcommittee on committee business. The Clerk has distributed copies of the report to each of you.

Would a member of the subcommittee like to move the report and read it into the record in full? Ms. Skelly.

Ms. Donna Skelly: Your subcommittee on committee business met on Thursday, December 5, 2019, to consider the method of proceeding with pre-budget consultations 2020, and recommends the following:

(1) That the committee hold pre-budget consultations in Toronto on January 17, 2020 from 9 a.m. to 12 noon and 1 p.m. to 5 p.m.

(2) That the committee hold pre-budget consultations in Sioux Lookout, Thunder Bay, Ottawa, Belleville, and Niagara during the week of January 20, 2020.

(3) That the research officer provide an interim summary of oral presentations to the committee by 5 p.m. January 31, 2020.

(4) That the committee meet for the purpose of report-writing in Toronto on February 11 and 13, 2020.

(5) That a copy of the final report on the pre-budget consultation 2020 be presented to the Minister of Finance prior to the report being translated, printed and tabled in the House.

(6) That the Clerk of the Committee, with the authorization of the Chair, post information regarding the pre-budget consultations on the Ontario parliamentary channel, on the Legislative Assembly's website and with Cision.

(7) That the Clerk of the Committee, with the authorization of the Chair, place an advertisement in the Turtle Island News and a major newspaper for one day in each of the cities where the committee intends to hold pre-budget consultations, and that the advertisements be placed in both English and French papers where possible.

(8) That presenters be offered a total of 15 minutes, seven minutes for presentations and eight minutes for questioning divided equally amongst the recognized parties.

(9) That interested people who wish to be considered to appear before the committee contact the Clerk of the Committee by 5 p.m. on January 9, 2020.

(10) That, following the deadline for requests to appear, the Clerk of the Committee provide the subcommittee members and their designate with a list of all interested presenters by 12 noon on January 10, 2020.

(11) That the Clerk of the Committee be authorized to schedule all interested presenters in a location, if all requests received by the deadline can be accommodated.

(12) That if all requests to appear cannot be accommodated in any given location, each of the subcommittee members or their designate provide the Clerk of the Committee with a prioritized list of presenters chosen from the list provided by the Clerk by 10 a.m. on January 13, 2020.

(13) That in the event that there are fewer than 10 interested presenters in any location, other than Sioux Lookout, the Chair be authorized to cancel the hearing at that location and reschedule presenters to appear on an alternate date if possible.

(14) That the deadline for written submissions be 6 p.m. on the last day of public hearings.

(15) That the exception of procedural motions during public hearings—the committee consider all other motions during report-writing.

(16) That the committee authorize two staff persons from each recognized party to travel with the committee, space permitting, for the purpose of pre-budget consultations and that reasonable expenses incurred for travel, accommodation and meals be paid for by the committee upon receipt of a properly filed expense claim.

(17) That the research officer provide a draft report to the committee by 5 p.m. on February 7, 2020.

(18) That the Clerk of the Committee provide each recognized party with one printed copy of all written submissions, and that each member of the committee receive all written submissions electronically.

The Chair (Mr. Amarjot Sandhu): Thank you, Ms. Skelly. Can you please repeat paragraph 15?

Ms. Donna Skelly: Item line 15: "That, with the exception of procedural motions during public hearings, the committee consider all other motions during report-writing."

The Chair (Mr. Amarjot Sandhu): Thank you. MPP Skelly has moved that we accept the report of the subcommittee. Is there any debate? MPP Smith.

Mr. Dave Smith: With respect to item number 2, the pre-budget consultation being held in Ottawa: If possible, I'd like to change it so that we are not going to Ottawa and that we'd be going to Kitchener-Waterloo instead.

The Chair (Mr. Amarjot Sandhu): In order to do that, you need to move a motion.

MPP Smith.

Mr. Dave Smith: I move that on item number 2, we strike out “Ottawa” and replace it with “Kitchener-Waterloo”.

The Chair (Mr. Amarjot Sandhu): MPP Smith has moved a motion. Is there any debate? MPP Armstrong.

Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong: I understand that there are no eastern stops in this committee. Ottawa is an important part of this whole process when it comes to deputation. My understanding is that the subcommittee voted that Ottawa be one of the stops, so for us to overrule that, I think, is not procedurally correct—if I may ask that.

I also understand that the Premier wants to hold his own consultation process above and beyond the committee. The committee’s work is through the Legislature. It’s supposed to be impartial in the sense that people come here and they know they’ve been heard. So having it stop in Kitchener-Waterloo—I don’t know what the purpose is, if that’s where the Premier wants to hold his round table, but Ottawa should be included. It’s the eastern stop in this whole travel of the bill. The community work needs to be independent of any partisan work. It needs to be part of the legislative process.

I’m putting that on record. Once I get subbed in, I’ll be voting against this motion.

0910

The Chair (Mr. Amarjot Sandhu): Any further debate? MPP Smith.

Mr. Dave Smith: Belleville is considered part of the eastern part of the province. I don’t see that we would be inconveniencing anyone by hosting it in Belleville.

What we’re trying to show is that we represent more than just the urban centres. If you take a look at the centres that we’re going to, most of them are quite urban. I would suggest that Thunder Bay is an urban centre in the north, Niagara is also an urban centre and Toronto is definitely an urban centre. Hosting it in Belleville would not be a hardship whatsoever.

The Chair (Mr. Amarjot Sandhu): MPP Skelly.

Ms. Donna Skelly: One of the things that I have to remind committee is that the cities we are visiting are cities we did not visit last year. We’ve made a concerted effort to try to move to cities where we were not last year. We did visit Ottawa last year. It was a heck of a snowstorm, but we were in Ottawa last year. This is just another option.

The Chair (Mr. Amarjot Sandhu): Any further debate? MPP Piccini.

Mr. David Piccini: As a member from the 401 corridor in eastern Ontario, I know it’s been quite some time since we’ve had a pre-budget consultation in Belleville. As MPP Skelly indicated, given that we were already in Ottawa last year for a very productive round of consultations, and as per what MPP Smith said as a member of eastern Ontario and a rural member, I think it’s really important that we give our agriculture community and others in eastern Ontario a chance to weigh in on some important legislation. It’s nice to see the committee juggling different locations. I’m very pleased to see that we’ll be in a number of cities and

towns that we weren’t in before. I’m really looking forward to Belleville, Ontario, especially.

The Chair (Mr. Amarjot Sandhu): Further debate? MPP Armstrong.

Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong: I urge the committee members to reconsider. The subcommittee came out and decided these cities. Belleville and Ottawa—I mean, I lived in Belleville for quite some time, so I think you should go to Belleville, but I think you should also go to Ottawa.

I also understand that the subcommittee made these decisions. To overturn them is not good practice. Having Ottawa on the list is extremely important. It’s a pre-budget consultation, and I think we need to hear from an eastern city, as well as Belleville, of course, but a city that has a lot of interest in pre-budget consultations.

The Chair (Mr. Amarjot Sandhu): Further debate? MPP Smith.

Mr. Dave Smith: I believe the member was elected in 2014 and should know procedure: The subcommittee makes recommendations, but the entire committee is the one that actually finalizes it and makes the decision. Subcommittees do not make decisions; they make recommendations. To suggest otherwise would be 100% incorrect.

The Chair (Mr. Amarjot Sandhu): Further debate? MPP Armstrong.

Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong: You should know, if we’re going to play “You should know, I should know,” I was elected in 2011, thank you. My point being—

Interjections.

Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong: Actually, let’s keep it professional, okay? Let’s do that.

The Chair (Mr. Amarjot Sandhu): I would remind the member not to use unparliamentary language, please.

Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong: The point that I’m trying to make: If the subcommittee made the decisions, they had reasons why. For us to just overturn that I think is disrespectful to those members who had those decisions in place before we came to committee. That’s my point. In the subcommittee, they had their reasons. Have you communicated that to them? Absolutely not.

It’s always a surprise with this government. We need to have consistency and consultation before you make those decisions and expect everyone to agree to everything. I still stand by Ottawa as well as Belleville. Like I say, I think Belleville is a huge, important city, as well, to be consulted. But I think Ottawa is also a significant part of these consultations.

The Chair (Mr. Amarjot Sandhu): Further debate? MPP Piccini.

Mr. David Piccini: I would respect the member opposite’s opinion and concerns. She’s well within her rights to voice where she would or wouldn’t like to go. But I would remind her that the subcommittee makes recommendations and the committee of the whole is gathered here. I know a number of members opposite who are regular members of the standing committee. We’ve had a number of conversations about this. Again, it takes the committee as a whole—all members who are standing members of

this committee—to discuss and make ultimate recommendations and ultimate decisions, based on the subcommittee's recommendations.

I completely agree that we have two eastern stops, so a change from Ottawa is fine with me.

The Chair (Mr. Amarjot Sandhu): MPP Skelly.

Ms. Donna Skelly: I was on the subcommittee and I just want to share some of the arguments that we put forward for some of the destinations. The reality was that we were not passionate about Ottawa. It was more of a “Can we get from point A to point B with a stop?” That was the truth.

The passionate destination was somewhere far north. We worked with MPP Mamakwa and the Clerk's office to identify the most northern location that we could visit that would accommodate the number of people we were bringing and the fact that we had to hold a conference and have the infrastructure in place. We decided that was the priority—that really was. We ended up with Sioux Lookout. Respectfully, Ottawa was not a major city. It wasn't really one of the priorities; it was a northern region.

I think that we were very accommodating and very passionate about finding a place that we could all go to in northern Ontario. Truthfully, Ottawa was to accommodate a stopover for the plane more than anything, to be very honest with you, because we recognized we had been there last year. Belleville was identified because we wanted to include residents and stakeholders from eastern Ontario. We felt it was new; we hadn't done it for a while, in my recollection. I don't even know if they've ever travelled there.

I'm just presenting that to you so you have a bit of insight into the conversation.

The Chair (Mr. Amarjot Sandhu): MPP Armstrong.

Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong: I thank you for that. I appreciate that explanation.

I do have a question, though, and it is of concern, so I will ask the question. We're changing it to K-W. I just heard recently that the Premier wants to hold a round table, so my question is, is that round table going to be in Kitchener-Waterloo? That's my concern. If it's being arranged that those two places are changed and there's a round table for the Premier in that location, then I would say that's not good form. I'm putting that out there honestly.

The Chair (Mr. Amarjot Sandhu): Further debate? MPP Mamakwa.

Mr. Sol Mamakwa: Certainly, I just want to say thank you for going to Sioux Lookout. I know last year members across the way had committed to coming to the riding and then, at the end of the day, they said no. But I really appreciate that.

On a second comment about Ottawa, I know, based on the Premier's round table versus a legislative process such as a committee—certainly it's very clear, however you put your arguments forward. It's clear that it's a PC process on both sides. To me, it's clear. I would just put that on record.

The Chair (Mr. Amarjot Sandhu): Further debate? Seeing none, are the members ready to vote?

Mr. Sol Mamakwa: Recorded vote.

Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong: Recorded vote.

The Chair (Mr. Amarjot Sandhu): So just to be clear, we're voting on Mr. Smith's amendment to replace Ottawa with Kitchener-Waterloo.

Ayes

Bailey, Piccini, Roberts, Skelly, Dave Smith.

Nays

Armstrong, Mamakwa.

The Chair (Mr. Amarjot Sandhu): The motion is accordingly carried.

Any further debate on the subcommittee report? MPP Armstrong.

Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong: Just for clarification, Ottawa has been removed and Kitchener-Waterloo has been subbed in. Is that what we just voted on?

The Chair (Mr. Amarjot Sandhu): Yes. Any further debate? No? Are the members ready to vote?

Shall the subcommittee report, as amended, carry? All those in favour? All those opposed?

Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong: Sorry, may I ask—

The Chair (Mr. Amarjot Sandhu): MPP Armstrong.

Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong: May I ask for you to repeat what we're voting on? I didn't quite catch it.

The Chair (Mr. Amarjot Sandhu): We're voting on the subcommittee report, as amended.

Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong: Is there a number that we're—

The Chair (Mr. Amarjot Sandhu): The whole report.

Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong: Okay.

The Chair (Mr. Amarjot Sandhu): All those in favour? All those opposed? It's accordingly carried.

There's one other item of business to discuss. In past years, there has been live streaming of the pre-budget consultations. Is there agreement to live-stream the hearings where possible? Any debate? Agreed.

Any further discussion? MPP Skelly.

Ms. Donna Skelly: I'm just curious, Mr. Chair, if we're able to live-stream from Sioux Lookout. Do we know? We don't know? Okay, that's fine. We don't know. I'm just curious.

The Clerk of the Committee (Ms. Julia Douglas): That's something that broadcast and recording will have to work out there. They'll work with the venue that we find for the committee meeting, to sort that out with them. It will probably depend on the Internet, but that's something that will be worked out later.

Ms. Donna Skelly: Thank you.

The Chair (Mr. Amarjot Sandhu): Any further discussion? Seeing none, this meeting is adjourned. Thank you very much.

The committee adjourned at 0922.

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