



Northwest Territories Legislative Assembly

Standing Committee on Accountability and Oversight

Progress Report on Plans and Priorities

Chair: Mr. Charles Dent, MLA

**MEMBERS OF THE STANDING COMMITTEE ON
ACCOUNTABILITY AND OVERSIGHT**

Charles Dent
MLA Frame Lake
Chair

Floyd Roland
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Deputy Chair

Brendan Bell
MLA Yellowknife South

Bill Braden
MLA Great Slave

Paul Delorey
MLA Hay River North

David Krutko
MLA Mackenzie Delta

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Northwest
Territories

Legislative Assembly
Standing Committee on Accountability and Oversight

NOV 5 2001

THE HONOURABLE ANTHONY (TONY) WHITFORD, MLA
SPEAKER OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

Mr. Speaker,

Your Standing Committee on Accountability and Oversight has the honor of presenting its Progress Report on Plans and Priorities and commends it to the House.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Charles Dent".

Charles Dent, MLA
Chair

PROGRESS REPORT ON PLANS AND PRIORITIES STANDING COMMITTEE ON ACCOUNTABILITY AND OVERSIGHT

INTRODUCTION

The Standing Committee on Accountability and Oversight is a Standing Committee of the 14th Legislative Assembly that was established by Motion at the first session of the 14th Assembly. Committee Members met shortly after being appointed to develop a vision, mission and common set of goals. The *Report on the Operational Planning Workshop* and the *Report on Priorities and Objectives Workshop* were presented in the Legislative Assembly in February and March of 2000.

From the outset Committee Members stated their commitment to making a positive contribution to the 14th Legislative Assembly and to continuing efforts to making government more open and transparent. Members felt that it was important to report to the Legislative Assembly and the public on the priority areas that were identified by the Standing Committee on Accountability and Oversight as evidence of their commitment.

The fall of 2001 marks the halfway point of the 14th Legislative Assembly. The Standing Committee on Accountability and Oversight would like to take this opportunity to report to the Legislative Assembly and the public on Committee activities and summarize the progress that has been made in the areas that Members have identified as important early in the term.

THE STRATEGIC PLANNING PROCESS

The mandate of the Standing Committee on Accountability and Oversight is to:

- a) review issues with government-wide implications;
- b) conduct the overview of the budget and the fiscal framework;
- c) consider the budgets and financial management of boards and agencies that are outside the responsibility of any Standing Committee including the Office of the Legislative Assembly;
- d) examine the reports on the annual financial statements and public accounts of the Government of the Northwest Territories and the Report of the Auditor General;
- e) review Government reports on financial and performance results and program evaluation reports to ensure anticipated outcomes are being achieved and accountability is maximised;
- f) co-ordinate House Business scheduling and planning in co-operation with appropriate Cabinet representatives; and
- g) consider any other matter referred by the House.

The Standing Committee on Accountability and Oversight held a two day operational and planning session followed by a workshop to set priorities and objectives in February and March of 2000. As part of its operational approach, Members agreed on a vision, mission and values statement and set out priorities and objectives for the Committee. These objectives were developed around issues that had government-wide implications and would therefore fall into the scope of the Standing Committee on Accountability and Oversight. In addition it was agreed that the Committee's objective was to be as open as possible to stakeholders and the general public. Committee has made every effort to ensure that this philosophy of openness has underscored all of its activities.

Government wide issues were identified and articulated as nine goals or objectives:

1. To Achieve progress on constitutional and electoral reform;
2. To advocate for the rights of the Public and those needing a voice in dealing with Government;
3. A Public Service that is representative of the population it serves, and is treated fairly and managed effectively;
4. A more effective government organisation, structure and operations;
5. Survival of Official Aboriginal Languages;
6. A cohesive and current Workers' Compensation system and the associated governing authorities to meet the changing environments;
7. An energy strategy to address the shifting NWT environment and relevant outside influences;
8. A strategy for sharing control of and responsibility for northern resources;
9. To maximise the benefits of recreational activities and to foster the positive effect that recreation has on community health and well being.

The Standing Committee on Accountability and Oversight also has ongoing goals that are explicit in the mandate.

10. The comprehensive overview of the Government of the Northwest Territories' budget and fiscal framework;
11. The consideration of budgets and the financial management of the NWT Workers' Compensation Board, the NWT Power Corporation and other similar government boards and agencies;
12. Examination of the Auditor General reports; and
13. Co-ordination of House Business scheduling and planning in co-operation with Cabinet.

PROGRESS ON COMMITTEE PRIORITIES

A summary of key efforts undertaken in support of each goal or objective is outlined below.

To Achieve progress on constitutional and electoral reform

The sunset clause for electoral boundaries has imposed deadlines for this government. Committee recognised that caucus has the lead but felt that they could play a role in moving the process along. A Special Committee on the Implementation of Self-Government and the Sunset Clause was established during the third session of the 14th Legislative Assembly.

The Special Committee now has responsibility for recommending a course of action to the Legislative Assembly.

To advocate for the rights of the Public and those needing a voice in dealing with Government

The absence of human rights legislation and the potential for litigation dictated that action be taken to advance: 1) human rights legislation, 2) an ombudsman like office to speak on behalf of children, and 3) Access to Information and protection of Privacy Legislation.

- 1) Human Rights Legislation: Committee advocated for the rights of the public by introducing *Motion 15-14(2) Enactment of Human Rights Legislation* that was adopted by the Legislative Assembly on March 31, 2000.

Cabinet has responded by undertaking consultation on a draft Bill and has committed to introducing Legislation in the Fall of 2001.

- 2) Children's Advocate: Committee has not undertaken any significant action in relation to this objective, however the Minister responsible for Health and Social Services has told Members in the Assembly that the Government is moving toward establishing such an office. During a review of the Supplementary Appropriation Act No 1 2001-2002 in Committee of the Whole, June 11, 2001 Ms. Groenewegen was asked if the government was moving towards instituting a Child's advocate in the Northwest Territories. Ms. Groenewegen replied "Yes we are, and that is part of this funding allocations to do the research and development of a proposal for a child advocate, so yes we are." (Hansard, June 11, 2001 p. 147)

Committee looks forward to hearing more on the Government's proposal in this area.

- 3) Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Legislation: Committee advocated for the rights of the public to a more open and transparent government by reviewing the *Annual Report and Recommendations of the Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Commissioner*, and presented the *Report on the Review of the Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Commissioner's Report 1999-2000* in the Legislative Assembly. This marked the first time that a Standing Committee reviewed the annual report and considered the Commissioner's recommendations. In keeping with Committee's philosophy of openness and public involvement meetings were open to the public. Committee Report 2-14(4) was read in the house on October 4, 2001. The Government's response to Committee's Report and recommendations is pending

Future Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Annual Reports will automatically be referred to the Standing Committee on Accountability and Oversight.

A Public Service that is representative of the population it serves, and is treated fairly and managed effectively

Committee researched the advantages and disadvantages of public service commissions in other jurisdictions. Efforts to call attention to the poor Affirmative Action results, hiring practices and government-wide human resources management practices included a theme approach for members' statements and question period culminating in passage of *Motion 5-14(3) Establishment of a Public Service Commission*. The Executive Council commissioned *The Human Resources Management Study* (The Thornton Report) in response to the motion and transmitted the Report to Committee.

Although the Government has not formally responded to the recommendations in the Thornton Report, the Standing Committee on Accountability and Oversight reported to the Legislative Assembly on June 12, 2001 with a Preliminary Committee Report 4 - 14(4), which included recommendations for a process to continue to work with the government to achieve a professional public service.

Since the Committee Report was presented there have been on-going discussions between Committee and the government, and Committee is hopeful that an agreement will on the process to move this forward will soon be reached.

A more effective government organisation, structure and operations

Committee had anticipated receiving the Program and Functional review concerning departments, boards and agencies and looked forward to assessing the effectiveness and efficiency related to service delivery. Of particular interest were the organisation and structure of Health and Social Service Boards, Education Councils, and the Department of Resources, Wildlife and Economic Development. The Minister responsible for Health and Social Services commissioned the Cuff Report to examine the role and structure of

both the Department and the Boards. The Cuff report is presently before the Standing Committee on Social Programs.

Motion 14-14(2) Request for Comprehensive Audit of Resources, Wildlife and Economic Development was defeated in the Legislative Assembly.

Committee was offered a briefing on Regional Reorganisation by letter in June. To date, however, the Government has advised us that they are not ready to actually deliver the briefing.

Survival of Official Aboriginal Languages

The Official Languages Act called for a mandatory review every 10 years with one due during the 14th Legislative Assembly. A Special Committee on the Review of the Official Languages Act has been established.

The Standing Committee on Accountability and Oversight will continue to review the Annual Reports of the Languages Commissioner.

A cohesive and current Workers' Compensation system and the associated governing authorities to meet the changing environments

The Division of the Territories and outdated Legislation dictated the need to review the Workers' Compensation System over the life of the 14th Assembly. The Standing Committee on Accountability and Oversight advocated for such a review, and the Minister responsible for the Board responded by making a commitment to conduct public hearings and prepare appropriate legislation for introduction and passage during the life of this Assembly.

The Standing Committee on Accountability and Oversight looks forward to reviewing the results of the Panel's hearings and to new updated Legislation being introduced.

An energy strategy to address the shifting NWT environment and relevant outside influences

Committee urged the Executive Council to develop a comprehensive energy strategy, by leading a campaign to call attention to high cost of energy, green house gas emissions and the need for alternative energy options.

Committee Members noted that previous Assemblies had called for the government to develop a strategy in view of significant energy costs in the Northwest Territories and the need to reduce dependence on fossil fuels and greenhouse gas emissions. Through its efforts to heighten awareness and draw attention to energy issues and concerns, Committee was successful in having the Legislative Assembly adopt a motion calling for the Development of a Comprehensive Energy Strategy.

The Government has responded with the establishment of an Energy Secretariat in June of 2001 and the announcement of a Special Advisor to the premier to head up the Secretariat.

The Standing Committee on Accountability and Oversight is generally supportive of the government's exploration of hydroelectric potential both as an alternative to fossil fuel consumption and as a revenue source.

A strategy for sharing control of and responsibility for northern resources

The Standing Committee on Accountability and Oversight supports the Government in its approach to resource revenue sharing, and the work of the intergovernmental forum. Committee will continue to participate and represent the public interest in future discussions.

To maximise the benefits of recreational activities and to foster the positive effect that recreation has on community health and well being.

Committee Members investigated the distribution of lottery profits and the effectiveness and co-ordination of sports organisations in contributing positively to the social problems in communities. Through a series of briefings and presentations by various sports organisations Committee Members became better acquainted with the roles of each of the organisations.

Although Members of the Standing Committee on Accountability and Oversight remain interested in this issue the Standing Committee on Social Programs assumes the lead.

Other Activities

The Standing Committee on Accountability and Oversight tackled several other issues as they arose and urged the government to take action accordingly. Here are a few of the highlights of these activities:

Committee lobbied the Minister responsible for Education, Culture, and Employment to overturn the decision to assess federal Fuel Rebates as income for social assistance recipients.

- The Minister reversed the decision and the Department of Education, Culture, and Employment issued rebates to approximately 320 families.

Committee urged Executive Council to improve literacy levels in the NWT and introduced a motion adopted by the Legislative Assembly to develop a comprehensive Literacy strategy.

- Government responded with *Towards Literacy: A Strategy Framework*, which proposes to provide \$2.4 million dollars annually.

Committee urged the Premier to set the example for prudent financial management by reducing the interim budget for the Department of the Executive by \$100,000 in fiscal year 2000/2001.

- The Premier instructed the Minister of Finance to bring forward the appropriate motion to reduce the amount of the interim appropriation by \$100,000

Committee worked to have the Minister responsible for Education, Culture, and Employment reinvest \$1,000,000 identified departmental savings in income support programs in fiscal year 2000/2001.

- \$700,000 was re-invested into the program.

Committee advocated on behalf of surviving spouses who remarried prior to April 17, 1985 by urging the Minister responsible for Workers' Compensation Board to negotiate a lump sum settlement.

- A negotiated settlement was reached with five identified surviving spouses and the Minister brought forward the necessary Legislation.

OVERSIGHT AND REVIEW OF PUBLIC ACCOUNTS

The Standing Committee on Accountability and Oversight presented its Report on the Review of the Report of the Auditor General to the NWT Legislative Assembly for 1999 on June 5, 2001. The Report included a follow up to the Review of the 1997 and 1998 Auditor General's Report. Committee noted that the Government is expected to follow up on all initial and subsequent recommendations contained in the Report.

The Committee would like to see more timely tabling of the Public Accounts and will work with the Executive Council to achieve this goal.

CONDUCT THE OVERVIEW OF THE BUDGET AND THE FISCAL FRAMEWORK

This role is intended to improve the business planning and expenditure management information provided to the Legislative Assembly. Committee has recommended a sharpened focus on results, increased transparency of information and a process for public involvement in preparation of the Business Plans.

OTHER MATTERS

Openness and Public Involvement

The Standing Committee on Accountability and Oversight is committed to a government that is more open to stakeholders and the general public. In pursuit of this objective the Committee looks for opportunities to open meetings to the public. In addition, Internal Committee documents are often appended to Committee Reports when the issue is ready for presentation in the Legislative Assembly to allow the public to better understand the background leading to recommendations. During this Legislative Assembly the Standing Committee on Accountability and Oversight's Report on the Business Plans has been tabled for the first time along with the Committee Report on the Main Estimates.

Theme Days

In the past two years Committee Members used "Theme Days" as a way of working together to publicise, heighten awareness, and bring focus to issues of public concern. During the time allotted for Members statements and during question period Members would focus on a particular issue. The rules of the Legislative Assembly allow a period of time for Members of the Legislative Assembly to make a 2 1/2-minute statement on any matter.

Question period is typically one of the most publicised parts of the Assembly's proceedings and it provides an opportunity for Members of the Legislative Assembly to call attention to public issues. During question period MLA's ask ministers questions about government activity in order to seek out information. The responses are a way of making information about the government's activities public.

Members prepared several theme days on important public issues, including:

- Student Financial Assistance
- Health & Social Programs
- Greenhouse Gas and Resource Development
- Human Resources and Public Service Commission
- Literacy
- Water Quality
- FAS/FAE
- High Cost of Energy

Water quality, for example was of concern to Committee Members for a variety of reasons including contaminated drinking water in communities, inadequate and unsafe sources of water supply, ageing municipal water systems, and a drastic increase in insurance rates for municipalities. Members made statements and raised questions on water supply, quality, training and certification, water quality standards and environmental concerns.

As a result, the government has taken steps to address many of the issues raised including an examination of municipal systems and standards.

NEXT STEPS

The Standing Committee on Accountability and Oversight met on September 11, 2001 to review the work undertaken to date and to plan for the next fifteen months of business. Members reviewed the Vision statement and reaffirmed that:

Our vision is to be responsive and accountable to the public by acting with integrity to contribute to the achievement of the 14th Legislative Assembly's Vision.

The Mission statement was revised to better reflect the proactive role of committee, not merely a role in which Committee responds to government initiatives. Committee agreed that:

Our Mission will be to take purposeful action to support, question or oppose Government initiatives and to hold Government accountable; we will also propose that Government take action where appropriate and in the public interest

Within the context of the revised Mission statement Members revised the Goals and Priorities of the Committee. They are:

- To Advocate for the rights of the Public and those needing a voice in dealings with Government
- To have a Public Service that is representative of the population served; that is treated fairly and managed effectively
- To work toward effective government organisation, structure and operations
- To see a cohesive and current Workers' Compensation system and governing authorities to meet the changing environment
- To develop an Energy Strategy to address the changing NWT environment and outside influences
- To see a strategy for sharing control of resources including non- renewable resource development, and environmental impacts and liabilities of development.
- To develop a diversified long term fiscal outlook for the GNWT
- To advocate for Adequate Housing for residents
- To advocate for reduced cost of living for residents

- To support the development of prevention measures and promote awareness of the detrimental effects of FAS/FAE

Ongoing goals that are explicitly included in our Mandate were revised to reflect the recommendation that the Annual Reports of several statutory officers be referred to Standing Committee on Accountability and Oversight. They are:

- Conduct the Overview for the budget and fiscal framework
- Consider budgets and financial management of NWT Workers' Compensation Board, NWT Power Corporation and non-assigned boards and agencies.
- Examine Auditor General reports
- Co-ordinate House Business scheduling and planning with Cabinet.
- Review as necessary and appropriate, annual reports of Statutory officers of the Legislative Assembly including Commissioner of Official Languages; Conflict of Interest Commissioner; & Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Commissioner

CONCLUSION

The Government of the Northwest Territories is a non-partisan, consensus system of government. The Standing Committee on Accountability and Oversight allows Regular Members of the Legislative Assembly a mechanism to scrutinize the policies, programs and spending of the Government. Members of this Committee do not treat this responsibility lightly and we will continue to advocate on behalf of the public. We will urge consultation and collaboration as a fundamental theme to guide each of the priority areas.

Members believe that residents want this government to move forward toward achieving a better tomorrow. We also believe that residents want this government to do so in a manner that is fiscally responsible, prudent, and in the public interest. We will urge government to develop budgets and strategic investments that promote a strong northern economy and secure financial future.

As an integral part of a non-partisan, consensus system of government, Members of the Standing Committee on Accountability and Oversight will continue to make a sincere and determined effort to work with the government to succeed in achieving a Better Tomorrow.

CONFIDENTIAL

SUMMARY REPORT
RESULTS OF THE OPERATIONAL PLANNING WORKSHOP
ACCOUNTABILITY AND OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE
February 18 and 19, 2000

Prepared by Louise Vertes
Facilitator

Introduction

The Members of the Accountability and Oversight Committee (AOC) held a two-day operational planning workshop. A facilitator and Committee staff provided assistance to Members. This summary report records agreement reached by Members and highlights significant points of discussion.

Committee Terms of Reference

Members reviewed and discussed the proposed terms of reference for the AOC with a view to reaching common understanding about the Committee's mandate. As a result of their discussions, Members concluded that a revision to item (e) was in order. The revised clause would read:

- e) Review Government reports on financial performance results and **policy and** program evaluation reports to ensure anticipated outcomes are being achieved and accountability maximized.

Members' discussion also resulted in the clarification of certain terms or concepts found in the terms of reference.

The term "Government-wide" covers policies and programs that affect all departments and/or agencies. It covers policies and programs that are internal to Government of the Northwest Territories (GNWT) operations or that are directed externally to clients. The AOC is interested in not only what is being done to implement these policies or programs, but also in what is not being done. Examples given during discussion included the Affirmative Action Policy and the delegation of human resource management practices to departments.

Members were concerned that the AOC not interfere in matters falling within the mandate of other Standing Committees. It was recognized that there might be areas of overlap or interest that will need to be sorted out as they arise. When such issues arise, and there is a government-wide affect or implication, the AOC should address the matter. It is expected that when the Standing Committees on Social Programs and on Governance and Economic Development identify issues having government-wide implications, during their consideration of department-specific matters, the AOC will be asked to assume responsibility for further consideration of the issue. Members felt this would result in the best use of Standing Committee resources and is in keeping with the respective mandates of the Standing Committees.

Members saw their responsibility for the "overview" of the budget as a means to support the GNWT in making trade-offs among departmental priorities and objectives.

The AOC saw itself as providing assistance as a problem-solver to the Standing Committees on Social Programs and on Governance and Economic Development. This assistance would be offered in a manner that was consistent with the terms of reference for each Committee and the responsibilities of individual Members of the Legislative Assembly.

Operating Realities and the Environment

Members discussed the operating realities or environment in which the AOC will operate with a view to reaching a common understanding of the challenges and opportunities for the Committee. Members agreed that the following were significant factors to take into account.

- Operating as a group will produce better results than operating as individuals.
- There is a cost to the AOC's effectiveness when Members are not operating from a set of common or shared values.
- By virtue of their numbers in the Legislative Assembly, the AOC can set the agenda. Having said this, the AOC must want to set the agenda in the face of:
 - Cabinet lobbying to accept a point of view different from the AOC position;
 - Disagreements within the AOC about the preferred course of action; and,
 - Competing constituency issues.
- There are time limitations that affect the AOC's work:
 - The length of Members' term of office (4 years);
 - The effect of decisions made before the 14th Legislative Assembly took office; and,
 - The time available for AOC Members to meet, plan and carry out their plans.
- There is no current definition of consensus government.
- A common understanding and acceptance of confidentiality protocols is key to the work of the AOC. This extends to what is confidential and when previously confidential material may be publicly disclosed. Members agreed that communication protocols will not be effective unless there is a commitment to following them.
- There are formal processes in place now for issuing minority reports and expressing dissenting opinions.
- The Rules and processes of the Legislative Assembly are there to be used by Members individually and by Committees. They provide an opportunity for the AOC to take concerted effort related to a particular issue.
- Whenever the AOC establishes a plan of action, whether a general plan or one specific to an issue, it must be flexible enough to respond to emergency issues.
- Public access to the AOC and its deliberations must be balanced with the Committee's need for a forum that promotes frank and open discussion among Members.
- The AOC and its Members are in the "public eye".

Committee Vision, Mission and Values

Members discussed their view of the future and the purpose and scope of the AOC, within the context of the terms of reference, with a view to agreeing to statements of Vision and Mission. Members agreed to the following statements:

Vision

Our Vision is to be responsive and accountable to the public by acting with integrity to contribute to the achievement of the 14th Legislative Assembly's Vision.

Mission

Taking positive action to support, question or oppose Government initiatives and to hold Government accountable.

Members agreed to the substance of shared values that would form part of the Vision and Mission statements. Subsequent to the workshop, the following was recommended for their consideration:

Values

As Members of the Accountability and Oversight Committee, we will work together in a manner that:

- Is in accordance with the Members' Conduct Guidelines;
- Promotes trust and openness in our dealings with each other;
- Provides the opportunity to exercise our right and privilege to voice opinions;
- Recognizes that after best efforts to reach consensus, we may agree to disagree; and,
- Recognizes there are formal and established procedures through which dissenting Members may express their views.

Internal Operating Procedures

Members discussed the need for internal operating procedures over and above those already established in the Rules, policies and procedures of the Legislative Assembly with a view to agreeing to the need for and substance of such procedures. The discussion resulted in the identification of further action to develop procedures and, in some cases, certain components of proposed procedures.

- A procedure that governs the general responsibilities of Committee Members, based on the existing Board of Management Policy 1.13 dealing with Member's attendance, preparation for meetings, etc. should be developed.
- A procedure or protocol that establishes a standing agenda for Committee business should be developed. Specific direction was given to include as the first and second items of business a prayer and declaration of conflict of interest. Direction was also given to include a standing agenda item for "Member's Issues". During the discussion of external relationships, direction was also given to include a standing agenda item for "Information Reports from Standing Committees".
- A procedure that governs the responsibilities of the Chairperson based on the existing Board of Management Policy 1.13 should be developed. This procedure should also include the Chairperson's responsibility to:
 - Canvas Members before Committee meetings, or in relation to cyclical events, to identify the issues they wish to discuss;
 - Share the issues identified by individual Members with all Members of the Committee;
 - Coordinate the implementation of agreed activities during and between Sessions;
 - In the short term, work with the Government House Leader regarding Sessional business; and,
 - Delegate responsibilities to Members, based on Committee wishes and the interest of Members.
- Members agreed they want to have a planned Committee approach to Sessional business (excepting emergencies).
- Members saw the need for a Committee schedule and work plan based on Committee priorities. At this stage, it is too early to issue direction in this regard.
- Members expressed support for holding Committee meetings before the commencement of Sessions and accepted that this means coming in earlier before a Session than in the past.
- Members agreed to meet daily, starting at 9:00 a.m., during Sessions.

- During discussion of this and other agenda items, Members repeatedly raised the need to be clear on confidentiality issues. This includes:
 - What documents or information is confidential;
 - When are documents initially classified as confidential considered public;
 - The responsibility of Chairpersons to be the first to communicate the results of Standing Committee deliberations; and,
 - The latitude available, or not available, to Members to discuss Standing Committee business outside the Committee.
- Direction on additional internal operating procedures, such as staff support, is premature. However, Members were clear that staff should use all available avenues to obtain information from the GNWT for the Committee, including the avenues available under access to information legislation.

External Relationships (and the Need to Formalize)

Members discussed external relationships with a view to identifying the most important ones and providing direction on the development of any procedures to govern such relationships.

Cabinet

- The AOC wants Cabinet to continue the past practice of providing legislative and policy proposals to Standing Committees.
- The AOC wants to promote open access to Cabinet, and by Cabinet to the AOC, specifically:
 - Regular AOC and Cabinet meetings that would explore ways to work together;
 - Attendance by the appropriate Minister(s) at AOC and other Standing Committee meetings;
 - Provision of information by the AOC to Cabinet about Committee procedures and protocols;
 - Information from Cabinet to the AOC and other Standing Committees when there is a change to established Government plans or initiatives; and,
 - Acceptance by Committee Members, Cabinet and Ministers that access to Standing Committees is through the Committee Chairperson.
- The AOC will consider appropriate support to a MLA, on request, in pursuing an issue with Cabinet or a Minister, where adequate responses have not been forthcoming.
- When pursuing issues with Cabinet or Ministers, the AOC will involve a MLA(s) when the issue is in or affects their constituency.
- The AOC expects full and complete briefings from Cabinet or Ministers whether they are new to the department or not.

Standing Committees

- The AOC respects the mandates of other Standing Committees and will not let others, including Cabinet or Ministers, use the AOC to avoid first dealing with the appropriate Standing Committee.
- The AOC will pursue opportunities for joint meetings with other Standing Committees to deal with issues and to share staff resources in support of joint activities.
- The AOC wants to see the sharing of minutes among Standing Committees.
- The AOC sees itself as a body that can act as a problem solver for other Standing Committees.

Media

- The AOC wishes to be proactive in its dealings with the media to get its message into the public domain. Therefore, the Committee will use various techniques, such as:
 - Press releases;
 - Press briefings;
 - Consideration of a Committee web page;
 - Techniques targeted to provide access to community and regional media; and,
 - Public meetings at which the media may attend.

It should be clear that the Committee intends to use proactive techniques as opposed to attempting to use the media.

- Normally, the first person to communicate a document or position from the AOC will be the Chairperson, however, the Committee will consider appointing different spokespersons for specific issues. The appointment will be based on the issue at hand and the interests of Members. The same "rules" related to confidentiality would apply whether the spokesperson is the Chairperson or a Member.

Stakeholders and the General Public

- Members agreed that the Committee's objective is to be more open to stakeholders and the general public.
- The AOC will establish a range of approaches for soliciting stakeholder and public input. A way to categorize the significance of issues is also required. The established approaches may range from public hearings in communities for the most significant issues, to a decision that there is no public input required.
- The Committee wishes to examine innovative ways to obtain stakeholder and public opinion, for example, the use of communication technology or targeting specific sectors, with a view to applying the existing Rules and procedures to best advantage.

Caucus

- The Committee views Caucus as having 19 individual members and not with a membership composed of Cabinet and the AOC. The members of Caucus should be seen as independent of their Cabinet or Committee responsibilities.

Members were not satisfied that they had identified all external relationships during the time available at the workshop. This agenda item will need further work and specific direction related to the areas of agreement listed above.

AOC Priorities and Objectives

Given the time available, the Committee deferred consideration of this item. Direction to plan a "priorities and objectives" workshop on March 16, 2000 was given.

Timing for Selection of Chair and Deputy Chair

Members addressed this item.

Next Steps

- Members agreed to make public the statements of Vision and Mission as agreed. A statement of shared values will be drafted by Monday February 21 and, once accepted, considered for public release with the Vision and Mission.
- The AOC directs staff to arrange a 1-day workshop on Thursday March 16, 2000 to establish Committee priorities and objectives.
- Each AOC Member will submit a list of their priorities and objectives for the work of the Committee to the Chair by Thursday March 9, 2000. The Chair will use Members' submissions in the planning of the workshop.
- The AOC will meet Monday February 21, 2000 at 1:30 to consider procedures for House business during the upcoming Session.
- A summary report of the 2-day workshop will be submitted to AOC staff by February 25, 2000.

MEMO**February 7, 2000**

To: David Inch, Deputy Clerk,
Legislative Assembly.

From: Louise Vertes

Proposed Agenda and Approach – AOC Operational Planning Workshop

Further to our discussion this morning, I have revised the proposed agenda for your consideration. We also agreed to jointly put together a workbook for the use of members during the workshop. This workbook will not be extensive and will be tied to the agenda items. An outline is presented below.

1. The draft Agenda itself.
2. Item 3 Review of the Mandate for the AOC – the draft terms of reference for the AOC as contained in the orientation material you gave me Friday.
3. Item 4 the operating environment. A listing of some of the “givens” related to the environment to promote discussion. For example, additional references to the existing Rules related to standing committee operations, and other examples of the known environment such as members do not yet know each other.
4. Item 5 vision and mission – a definition, in lay terms of what a statement of vision and mission is and the form it should take (e.g. short).
5. Item 6 internal operations – a listing of items that might require internal procedures, a listing of items that might require the establishment of protocols.
6. Item 7 external relationships – in addition to repeating the potential groups with whom the AOC might want to establish relationships, the type of relationship or issues related to such relationships (such as confidentiality) might be listed.
7. Item 8 priorities and objectives – other than a reminder that there are both short and longer term priorities and objectives, I don't see anything more for this item.
8. Items 9 and 10 (selection of committee chair and deputy and next steps) – I do not see any additional information just a title and space for notes.

Once you have had a chance to review the material and to receive Mr. Dent's direction on the proposed agenda, I expect that we will get together later in the week to confirm our next steps.

DRAFT ONLY

**OPERATIONAL PLANNING WORKSHOP
ACCOUNTABILITY AND OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE (AOC)**

February 18 -19, 2000
Melville Room, Explorer Hotel
9:00 am

PROPOSED AGENDA

1. Opening Remarks from the Acting Chairperson.
2. Review and Adoption of the Agenda (discussion items, planned approach and expected results) as presented.

Expected Results: A common understanding and acceptance of the items for discussion, expected results for the workshop and planned approaches.

Approach: The group as a whole will review and discuss the proposed agenda to reach agreement.

3. Review of the Mandate for the AOC.

Expected Results: A common understanding of the AOC mandate dated January 26, 2000.

Approach: The group as a whole will review and discuss each item contained in the mandate.

4. What is the environment in which the AOC operates, and/or in which AOC Members wishes to operate, and does this present any constraints or opportunities?

Expected Results: A common understanding of the operating environment, for example, the opportunities presented by a consensus form of government and any values Members hold in common that will affect committee operations, for example, voluntary disclosure of a conflict of interest.

Approach: Small group discussions followed by a reporting to the group as a whole and agreement on the relevant elements of the operating environment and/or common values.

5. What is the vision and mission of the AOC?

Expected Results: A common understanding and acceptance of a statement of vision, that is what the AOC wants to see in the future, and a statement of mission, that is what the AOC sees as its "business".

DRAFT ONLY

Approach: Small group discussions followed by a reporting to the group as whole and agreement on statements of vision and mission for the AOC.

6. How should the AOC operate internally to carry out its mandate, achieve its vision and fulfill its mission? Specific topics of discussion could include:
- the coordination of sessional business,
 - prioritizing and scheduling committee business,
 - communications and transparency,
 - operating procedures over and above those established in the Rules, and
 - protocols for the working relationship among committee members.

Expected Results: A common understanding and agreement of any specific or general operating procedures.

Approach: Small group discussions followed by a reporting to the group as whole and agreement to operating procedures or protocols.

7. How should the AOC establish or conduct its external relationships to carry out its mandate, achieve its vision and fulfill its mission? Specifically, communications and working relationships with:
- Cabinet
 - Other Standing Committees
 - Special Committees
 - Special Interest Groups and Stakeholders
 - General Public

Expected Results: A common understanding and agreement to any operating procedures or protocols related to external relationships.

Approach: Small group discussions followed by a report to the group as a whole and agreement to recommended operating procedures or protocols.

8. What are the AOC's Priorities and Objectives?

Expected Results: Identification of committee priorities and objectives in the short and longer term and direction on the development of action plans to achieve them.

Approach: Small group discussions followed by a report to the group as a whole and agreement to committee priorities and/or objectives.

9. Timing for Selection of Chair and Deputy Chair of the AOC.

Expected Results: A schedule for the selection of the Chair and Deputy Chair.

Approach: Discussion and agreement from the group as a whole.

DRAFT ONLY

10. Next Steps

Expected Results: A common understanding and agreement to the form and distribution of the report on the results of the Operational Planning Workshop, including any reporting to the Legislature, and any items for action arising from the discussions.

Approach: Discussion and agreement from the group as a whole.

11. Adjournment.

February 11, 2000

Louise Vertes,
P. O. Box 2711,
Yellowknife, NT X1A 2R1
Fax: 920-4538
Email: lvertes@ssimicro.com

BY FAX -

David Inch,
Clerk of Committees,
Legislative Assembly.

Dear Mr. Inch,

Proposal to Facilitate an Operational Planning Workshop February 18 and 19, 2000

I am pleased to submit a proposal to facilitate the planning session for the Accountability and Oversight Committee on February 18 and 19.

The following services would be provided:

1. Planning and Preparation

- Meeting with the acting chairperson and committee staff to confirm the objectives and approach to the workshop.
- Assisting with the preparation of the agenda and background materials for participants.
- Provide advice on the logistics for the workshop (e.g. room set up, audio-visual aids).

2. Facilitate workshop

- Facilitate the workshop in a manner which will enable participants to complete the agenda as adopted, in the time prescribed, and achieve the expected results for each agenda item.

3. Workshop Report

- By Friday February 25, 2000, complete and deliver 1 hard copy and an electronic copy of a summary report of the workshop results.
- At your option, a more detail report for publication could be completed. The contractors normal per diem fees would apply.

Fees and Expenses

It is understood that the Legislative Assembly will be responsible for providing all materials associated with the conduct of the workshop including rental of a room(s) for the workshop, refreshments, audio-visual aids and flip chart paper and/or overheads used by workshop participants, and production and distribution of background materials.

It is also understood that Legislative Assembly staff in attendance at the workshop will provide the contractor with notes taken of the workshop proceedings to supplement the contractor's notes.

The contract's per diem rate is \$825.00 based on a 7.5 hour day. This is exclusive of GST.

Fees (fixed)

	Hours	Fee
Planning and Preparation:	6.0	\$660.00
Facilitation:	15.0	\$1,650.00
Summary Report:	7.5	\$825.00
Totals	28.5	\$3,135.00

Expenses (estimated)

Expenses are charged on the basis of actual cost.

Materials used in facilitation (overheads and/or flip chart paper)	\$25.00
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Thank you for the opportunity to submit this proposal and I look forward to working with you on this project:

Yours truly,

Louise Vertes.