



Highways and Public Works
Box 2703, Whitehorse, Yukon Y1A 2C6

Feb. 20, 2007

Arthur Mitchell
Chair, Standing Committee on Public Accounts
Yukon Legislative Assembly
Yukon Government Administration Building
A-9

Dear Mr. Mitchell:

SUBJECT: Follow-up Information – PAC Hearing Feb. 8, 2007 – HPW

During the conduct of the Feb. 8th Committee on Public Accounts hearing, two questions were raised, for which attending officials did not have information immediately at hand. The details requested are listed below.

Question 1:

Hon. Ms. Taylor: ...Does the department know how many leases will have to be renewed in the time frame leading up to the release of the master space plan? How has the department estimated the costs associated with any renewals, if there should be any?

Mr. Gasser: We do know how many leases are up for renewal in the next 12- to 14-month horizon. I didn't bring that list with me today. I think it is in the order of 30, if I recall. I certainly could provide that more accurately afterwards. (page 1-21)

Additional Information:

- There are 60 leases scheduled for renewal in the next 14 months.

Question 2:

Mr. Edzerza: I just have one on long-term planning and property management. When question 4 was asked -- why this Management Board directive has not been followed, with regard to the office space committee -- the answer given was basically that you don't know why it wasn't. I would like to know if information could be provided to the Chair of the Public Accounts Committee at a later date when there is more detail or specifics as to why it wasn't followed.

Mr. Gasser: Certainly, Mr. Chair. (page 1-22)

Additional Information:

- The technical standards in Management Board Directive 17/84 have not been substantively updated since August 1995; components of the Directive have not been used effectively since about 1997/98 given changes in budgeting and acquisition practices across government.
- Since 2002, the Committee has continued a role respecting office accommodation issues, but has not fulfilled the components of the mandate related to office furniture and equipment, as these have been managed directly at the department level for many years.
- Some aspects of MBD 17/84 are still used, namely the space standards when calculating the space allocation for a particular program/group.

Recent Background on Corporate Space Planning:

- In about 1998, the Office Space Committee stopped meeting as the members determined their oversight on the process was not adding value. The Directive was never amended to reflect a new process.
- When the Liberal government announced its plan for Renewal (June 2001) and with the pending devolution of the Northern Affairs Program (effective April 1, 2003), the need to discuss/review space issues related to both initiatives surfaced again.
- The Deputy Minister Space Committee started to meet in the fall of 2002 to deal with short/mid term issues associated with office space.
- Highways & Public Works presented a space plan in 2003 but it was not considered by Management Board.
- Since then, the Committee has been asked to address high level issues and has been informed about a number of functional program initiatives but has not been involved in the detailed approval or recommendation to the Minister or Management Board.
- Until recently, the practice used for space requests was to address requests on a case-by-case basis, with no long term strategy in place. This approach is suitable for small space projects, but becomes more difficult when dealing with complex, multi-departmental projects with a large volume of space.

- The Deputy Ministers Space Committee has approved a strategy where only the high priority space projects will be proceeding while the Master Space Plan is in progress this year.

Looking forward:

- In June 2006, a consultant team was hired to develop a Master Space Plan that will address the space requirements of all government departments over a three to five year period. A review of Management Board Directive 17/84 - Office Space Committee, Standards and Guidelines is included as part of this project.
 - Once completed, the Master Space Plan, directives and space allocation policy will provide Government of Yukon (GY) with the long term strategy to address its accommodation needs. This plan will recommend whether to build, buy or lease as the best option for acquiring space. This project is expected to be completed by fall 2007.
 - The Master Space Plan will be submitted to the Deputy Ministers' Space Committee for approval and recommendation to Management Board. Once approved, ongoing maintenance of this plan will be the responsibility of Highways & Public Works.
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If there are any further questions regarding these issues, please do not hesitate to contact me at your convenience.

Sincerely,



Janet Mann
A/Deputy Minister