



Yukon Legislative Assembly

Standing Committee on Public Accounts
33rd Yukon Legislative Assembly

NEWS RELEASE

June 19, 2013

PUBLIC ACCOUNTS COMMITTEE HEARING HELD

Whitehorse – The Standing Committee on Public Accounts of the Yukon Legislative Assembly held a public hearing on Wednesday, June 19, 2013 to consider a report entitled, *Report of the Auditor General of Canada to the Yukon Legislative Assembly – 2013: Capital Projects, Yukon Hospital Corporation*. Witnesses from the Yukon Hospital Corporation and the Department of Health and Social Services appeared before the Committee.

In the report the Auditor General looked at three capital projects – the new Watson Lake and Dawson City hospitals and the Crocus Ridge staff residence in Whitehorse. Together, these projects cost over \$72 million. The Corporation and the Department agreed with all the recommendations.

Public Accounts Committee (PAC) Chair Elizabeth Hanson thanked officials from the corporation and the department for their participation in the hearing.

In their review of the hospital projects, the Auditor General recommended that the Yukon Hospital Corporation, with the Department of Health and Social Services, work to conduct a health care needs assessment in the communities of Watson Lake and Dawson City, and use the information gathered to ensure that the services delivered in the hospitals are designed to meet the communities' needs in the most cost-effective way possible.

The Auditor General made a number of recommendations to the Yukon Hospital Corporation about how it could improve planning for future capital projects.

This was the second public hearing for the current PAC, which was appointed by the Legislative Assembly on December 7, 2011. Speaking about the committee's approach to its work, Ms. Hanson wanted to re-assure Yukoners that, "The committee members are committed to working co-operatively, and in a non-partisan way, to ensure efficiency in government spending on behalf of all Yukoners. The Committee members are looking forward to completing their report and having it tabled in the Legislative Assembly."

In its report the Committee may make observations and recommendations based on both the Auditor General's report and the evidence provided by officials during the public hearing.

The Auditor General's report and transcripts of the public hearing are available on the Committee's webpage at: http://www.legassembly.gov.yk.ca/comm_publicaccounts.html

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Background

The Standing Committee on Public Accounts is established by Standing Order 45(3) of the Standing Orders of the Yukon Legislative Assembly. Standing Order 45(3) says:

At the commencement of the first Session of each Legislature a Standing Committee on Public Accounts shall be appointed and the Public Accounts and all Reports of the Auditor General shall stand referred automatically and permanently to the said Committee as they become available.

Under this Standing Order the Committee is authorized by the Legislative Assembly to review and make recommendations on any subject covered in the Public Accounts of the Government of Yukon and all reports made to the Legislative Assembly by the Auditor General of Canada. The motion to appoint the Committee empowers it to call for persons, papers and records. The Committee does not review government policy. It provides a non-partisan focus on the economy and efficiency of the administration of government programs and resources.

The Public Accounts Committee members are: Elizabeth Hanson (Whitehorse Centre), who is Chair of the committee; Stacey Hassard (Pelly-Nisutlin), who is the Vice-Chair; Hon. Scott Kent (Riverdale North); Patti McLeod (Watson Lake); Sandy Silver (Klondike); Jan Stick (Riverdale South), and Mike Nixon (Porter Creek South). The Hon. Currie Dixon substituted for Hon. Mike Nixon at the Committee's June 19, 2013 public hearing.

The Clerk to the committee is Floyd McCormick, Clerk of the Yukon Legislative Assembly.

Also present for the hearings were officials from the Office of the Auditor General of Canada. Those officials were Ronnie Campbell, Assistant Auditor General, Eric Hellsten, Principal, Vancouver office, and Ruth Sullivan, Audit Project Leader.

Seven witnesses appeared before the Committee. The four witnesses from the Yukon Hospital Corporation were:

- Jason Bilsky, Chief Executive Officer;
- Craig Tuton, Chair of the Board of Trustees
- Kelly Steele, Chief Financial Officer; and
- Maureen Turner, Executive Director, Patient Experience

The three witnesses present from the Department of Health and Social Services were:

- Patricia Meade, Deputy Minister;
- Sherri Wright, Acting Deputy Minister, Health Services;
- Birgitte Hunter, Acting Deputy Minister, Corporate Services.