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Wednesday, December 8, 2021

Chair: The Honourable Jim Carr



Standing Committee on Public Safety and National Security

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• (1725)

[*Translation*]

The Clerk of the Committee (Mr. Wassim Bouanani): Honourable members of the committee, I see a quorum.

[*English*]

I must inform members that the clerk of the committee can only receive motions for the election of the chair. The clerk cannot receive other types of motions and cannot entertain points of order or participate in debate.

We can now proceed to the election of the chair. Pursuant to Standing Order 106(2), the chair must be a member of the government party.

I am ready to receive motions for the chair.

Ms. Raquel Dancho (Kildonan—St. Paul, CPC): I would like to move a motion to nominate the Honourable Jim Carr, my Winnipeg colleague, for the chair.

The Clerk: It has been moved by Ms. Dancho that Mr. Carr be elected chair of the committee.

Are there any further motions?

I declare the motion by Ms. Dancho carried and Mr. Carr duly elected as chair of the committee.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear!

The Chair (Hon. Jim Carr (Winnipeg South Centre, Lib.)): Thank you, everybody, for the trust you have reposed in me. Know that it is my ambition to be fair. I don't appreciate, and never have appreciated, hyperpartisanship in politics. Maybe more important than anything else, I hope to be efficient. Let's be efficient together, with a spirit of camaraderie.

If the committee is in agreement, I invite the clerk to proceed with the election of the vice-chairs.

The Clerk: Pursuant to Standing Order 106(2), the first vice-chair must be a member of the official opposition.

I am now prepared to receive motions for the first vice-chair.

Mr. Dane Lloyd (Sturgeon River—Parkland, CPC): I nominate my colleague Raquel Dancho for vice-chair.

The Clerk: We have a nomination for vice-chair.

Are there any further motions?

It has been moved by Mr. Lloyd that Raquel Dancho be elected as first vice-chair of the committee. I declare the motion carried and Ms. Dancho duly elected as first vice-chair of the committee.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear!

The Chair: You know, of course, that this means the Bombers will be winning the Grey Cup this weekend.

[*Translation*]

The Clerk: Pursuant to Standing Order 106(2), the second vice-chair must be a member of an opposition party other than the official opposition.

I am now prepared to receive motions for the second vice-chair.

• (1730)

[*English*]

The Chair: I don't have any translation, but I heard you and I know what you said. We're now looking for a nomination for the second vice-chair.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Sameer Zuberi (Pierrefonds—Dollard, Lib.): I nominate Ms. Michaud.

The Clerk: It has been moved by Mr. Zuberi that Ms. Michaud be elected as second vice-chair of the committee.

Are there any further motions?

(Motion agreed to)

The Clerk: I declare the motion carried and Ms. Michaud duly elected second vice-chair of the committee.

[*English*]

The Chair: Welcome to meeting number one of the House of Commons Standing Committee on Public Safety and National Security.

Today's meeting is taking place in a hybrid format, pursuant to the House order of November 25, 2021. Members are attending in person in the room and remotely using the Zoom application. The proceedings will be made available via the House of Commons website and, so you are aware, the webcast will always show the person speaking rather than the entirety of the committee.

Today's meeting is also taking place in the webinar format. Webinars are for public committee meetings and are available only to members, their staff and witnesses. Members enter immediately as active participants. All functionalities for active participants remain the same. Staff will be non-active participants and can therefore only view the meeting in gallery view.

I would like to take this opportunity to remind all participants in this meeting that taking screenshots or photos of your screen is prohibited.

Given the ongoing pandemic situation, and in light of recommendations from health authorities as well as the directives of the Board of Internal Economy on October 19, 2021, to remain healthy and safe, all those attending the meeting in person are to maintain two-metre physical distancing and must wear a non-medical mask when circulating in the room. It is highly recommended that the mask be worn at all times, including when people are seated. Members must maintain proper hand hygiene by using the provided hand sanitizer at the room entrance.

As the chair, I will be enforcing these measures for the duration of the meeting, and I thank members in advance for their co-operation.

To ensure an orderly meeting, I would like to outline a few rules to follow.

Members and witnesses may speak in the official language of their choice. Interpretation services are available for this meeting. You have the choice, at the bottom of your screen, of floor, English or French. If interpretation is lost, please inform me immediately and we will ensure that interpretation is properly restored before resuming the proceedings. The "raise hand" feature at the bottom of the screen can be used at any time if you wish to speak or alert the clerk.

For members participating in person, proceed as you usually would when the whole committee is meeting in person in a committee room. Keep in mind the Board of Internal Economy's guidelines for mask use and health protocols.

Before speaking, please wait until I recognize you by name. If you are on the video conference, please click on the microphone icon to unmute yourself. For those in the room, your microphone will be controlled as normal by the proceedings and verification officer.

When speaking, please speak slowly and clearly. When you are not speaking, your microphone should be on mute. I remind everyone that all comments by members and witnesses should be addressed through the chair. With regard to a speakers list, the committee clerk and I will do the best we can to maintain a consolidated order of speaking for all members, whether they are participating virtually or in person.

Members, do you wish to adopt routine motions? If so, the floor is now open to debate, and I will recognize a member to speak.

Mr. McKinnon, you raised your hand. It is my pleasure to recognize you. The floor is yours.

• (1735)

Mr. Ron McKinnon (Coquitlam—Port Coquitlam, Lib.): Thank you, Chair. It is delightful to be back in a physical meeting room again with everyone. It is good to see you all.

I would like to move a number of routine motions. The first one is regarding analyst services. I move:

That the committee retain, as needed and at the discretion of the Chair, the services of one or more analysts from the Library of Parliament to assist it in its work.

The Chair: Is there agreement on that suggestion?

(Motion agreed to)

The Chair: I now invite the analysts to come and take their seats.

Welcome. Congratulations.

Ms. Lyne Casavant (Committee Researcher): Thank you. I'm very happy.

I, along with two other colleagues, will be assisting the committee moving forward.

The Chair: Thank you.

Mr. McKinnon, please proceed.

Mr. Ron McKinnon: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

My second motion is on the subcommittee on agenda and procedure. I move:

That the Subcommittee on Agenda and Procedure be established and be composed of five members: the Chair, one member from each recognized party; and that the subcommittee work in a spirit of collaboration.

The Chair: That sounds like a good idea to me. Do we have agreement?

(Motion agreed to)

The Chair: Please proceed.

Mr. Ron McKinnon: On meeting without a quorum, I move:

That the Chair be authorized to hold meetings to receive evidence and to have that evidence published when a quorum is not present, provided that at least four members are present, including two members of the opposition parties and two members of the government party, but when travelling outside the Parliamentary Precinct, that the meeting begin after 15 minutes, regardless of members present.

The Chair: Shall we go through all of them and then have one vote at the end?

Is that acceptable? Okay. Please proceed.

Mr. Ron McKinnon: On the time for opening remarks and questioning of witnesses, I move:

That witnesses be given five minutes for their opening statement; that whenever possible, witnesses provide the committee with their opening statement 72 hours in advance; that at the discretion of the Chair, during the questioning of witnesses, there be allocated six minutes for the first questioner of each party as follows for the first round: Conservative Party, Liberal Party, Bloc Québécois, New Democratic Party. For the second and subsequent rounds, the order and time for questioning be as follows: Conservative Party, five minutes; Liberal Party, five minutes; Bloc Québécois, two and a half minutes; New Democratic Party, two and a half minutes; Conservative Party, five minutes; Liberal Party, five minutes.

On document distribution, I move:

That only the clerk of the committee be authorized to distribute documents to members of the committee provided the documents are in both official languages, and that the witnesses be advised accordingly.

On working meals, I move:

That the clerk of the committee, at the discretion of the Chair, be authorized to make the necessary arrangements to provide working meals for the committee and its subcommittees.

On travel, accommodation and living expenses, I move:

That, if requested, reasonable travel, accommodation and living expenses be reimbursed to witnesses not exceeding two representatives per organization; and that in exceptional circumstances, payment for more representatives be made at the discretion of the Chair.

On access to in camera meetings, I move:

That, unless otherwise ordered, each committee member be allowed to be accompanied by one staff member at in camera meetings and that one additional person from each House officer's office be allowed to be present.

On transcripts of in camera meetings, I move:

That one copy of the transcript of each in camera meeting be kept in the committee clerk's office for consultation by members of the committee or by their staff; and that the analysts assigned to the committee also have access to the in camera transcripts.

On notices of motion, I move:

That a 48-hour notice, interpreted as two nights, be required for any substantive motion to be moved in committee, unless the substantive motion relates directly to business then under consideration, provided that: (a) the notice be filed with the clerk of the committee no later than 4:00 p.m. from Monday to Friday; (b) the motion be distributed to Members and the offices of the whips of each recognized party in both official languages by the clerk on the same day the said notice was transmitted if it was received no later than the deadline hour; (c) notices received after the deadline hour or on non-business days be deemed to have been received during the next business day; and that when the committee is holding meetings outside the Parliamentary Precinct, no substantive motion may be moved.

On orders of reference from the House respecting bills, I move:

That in relation to orders of reference from the House respecting Bills,

(a) The clerk of the committee shall, upon the committee receiving such an order of reference, write to each member who is not a member of a caucus represented on the committee to invite those members to file with the clerk of the committee, in both official languages, any amendments to the bill, which is the subject of the said Order, which they would suggest that the committee consider;

(b) Suggested amendments filed, pursuant to paragraph (a), at least 48 hours prior to the start of clause-by-clause consideration of the bill to which the amendments relate shall be deemed to be proposed during the said consideration, provided that the committee may, by motion, vary this deadline in respect of a given bill; and

(c) During the clause-by-clause consideration of a bill, the Chair shall allow a member who filed suggested amendments, pursuant to paragraph (a), an opportunity to make brief representations in support of them.

● (1740)

Regarding technical tests for witnesses, I move:

That the clerk inform each witness who is to appear before the committee that the House administration support team must conduct technical tests to check the connectivity and the equipment used to ensure the best possible sound quality; and that the Chair advise the committee, at the start of each meeting, of any witness who did not perform the required technical tests.

Regarding linguistic review, I move:

That all documents submitted for committee business that do not come from a federal department, members' offices, or that have not been translated by the

Translation Bureau be sent for prior linguistic review by the Translation Bureau before being distributed to members.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. McKinnon.

We've now heard the routine motions read in their entirety. Do we have agreement that these motions be passed?

(Motions agreed to)

The Chair: Well, if it's all going to be this easy.... Thank you, everybody.

Go ahead, Madame Michaud.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Kristina Michaud (Avignon—La Mitis—Matane—Matapédia, BQ): Thank you, Mr. Chair. Congratulations on getting elected.

Given why we are here today, I would like to move the following motion. I propose:

That, in relation to the study of gun control, illegal arms trafficking and the increase in gun crimes committed by street gang members, the committee hold a minimum of two meetings by Friday, December 17, 2021, in order to allow the Minister of Public Safety as well as representatives of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police to appear before the committee as witnesses for a period of three hours each and that the committee report to the House no later than Thursday, March 3, 2022.

● (1745)

[*English*]

Ms. Pam Damoff (Oakville North—Burlington, Lib.): That's not what was passed in the House. I'm wondering if we could get a copy of it.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Kristina Michaud: This is actually a new motion, which was sent to the clerk.

[*English*]

Ms. Pam Damoff: It's a new motion.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Kristina Michaud: It is a motion that clarifies the one proposed in committee.

[*English*]

The Chair: The clerk advises me that there is no English translation of the motion that was just expressed; therefore, he cannot distribute it to members. This seems like a technical problem. If the motion can't be distributed, I don't know how we can deal with it.

Ms. Raquel Dancho: Can't we just read it in English?

[*Translation*]

Ms. Kristina Michaud: I have on hand the English version of the motion. I can read it.

[*English*]

The Chair: The clerk will endeavour to distribute the motion in English as quickly as possible. Meanwhile, we can debate the motion if members have opinions they want to express.

Ms. Pam Damoff: With all due respect, Chair, we can't debate the motion without having it in front of us.

The Chair: How long is it going to take to get the English translation?

The Clerk: It's available. I just need to send it to everyone else.

Ms. Raquel Dancho: My understanding is that this is not part of the routine motions, so we don't have to have a physical copy. Ms. Michaud is within her rights to bring it forward and have us debate it, so we should discuss the motion that she brought forward.

The Chair: The clerk says that we can't debate the motion unless it is in front of members, and it's not in front of members. Is that correct?

Ms. Raquel Dancho: It wasn't like that on all the other committees I was on.

The Chair: Let's try to work our way through this small technical glitch. The translation will be available in a matter of moments, but the committee, if it wishes, can begin debating the motion.

Is it the will of the committee to begin debating the motion?

Mr. McKinnon, you have the floor.

Mr. Ron McKinnon: The bells are ringing, so we need unanimous consent to proceed.

The Chair: Are the bells ringing again? That is a further complication.

Mr. Ron McKinnon: May I suggest that we carry on for 10 minutes, and then adjourn?

The Chair: We can't continue the meeting while the bells are ringing, unless we have unanimous consent to do so. Do we have unanimous consent to continue the meeting?

• (1750)

Ms. Pam Damoff: No.

The Chair: We do not.

We have two choices. We can go to the House to vote, and then come back here and resume the committee meeting, or we can satisfy ourselves that the important business of the committee has been discharged already, and we can end the meeting until the next meeting at the call of the chair.

Shall we adjourn? I have hands up.

Go ahead, Madame Michaud.

[Translation]

Ms. Kristina Michaud: Mr. Chair, if we adjourn the meeting without discussing the motion moved today, will the meeting will be postponed to another day this week? How will we decide?

[English]

The Chair: The subsequent meeting would be at the call of the chair. That would be a decision we would make, depending on the will of the committee dealing with this particular issue now.

You have the floor, Madame Dancho.

Ms. Raquel Dancho: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I believe we have a full two hours. Is that correct? If we suspend, we can come back and finish the two hours. That would be wise, given that we're in the middle of a motion. It's the reason we're here.

I suggest that we go to vote, and then return to finish the two hours we have been allotted.

The Chair: Mr. Clerk, given all these changes and all these procedures, is it the case that we have the room for the full two hours? Is that a possibility? Okay.

What is the will of the committee? It sounds to me like we would suspend the meeting now. We would go to the House to vote, and then we would come back and continue with the business of the committee.

Go ahead, Ms. Damoff.

Ms. Pam Damoff: We've amended a motion from the House, which I find unusual, because the House has directed us to do something. The minister will come next Thursday to appear before the committee. The motion before the House asked him to appear. He is prepared to come on Thursday. "At the call of the chair" is fine.

I would move that we adjourn today and hear from the minister on Thursday.

The Chair: The suggestion is made that, because we have agreement from the minister to appear in front of the committee next Thursday, we adjourn the meeting now and the meeting will begin again next Thursday.

Are there others who want to speak?

Go ahead.

Mr. Alistair MacGregor (Cowichan—Malahat—Langford, NDP): Just as a clarification, I notice that on our meeting schedule, if this were to be a regular week next week, we would meet on Tuesdays and Thursdays. Is there a possibility for the chair to call us on Tuesday to have a meeting, and then to honour the minister's meeting on Thursday as well?

The Chair: It's possible.

Ms. Pam Damoff: Is it possible with the rooms?

The Chair: I'm sorry. One at a time, please.

I have Madame Michaud.

[Translation]

Ms. Kristina Michaud: Thank you, Ms. Damoff.

If I have understood correctly, representatives of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police would come testify on Tuesday, the minister would testify next Thursday, and then we would break for Christmas.

Is that right?

[*English*]

The Chair: I have no information about the availability of the RCMP. I do have a note which says that Minister Mendicino will not be able to appear until Thursday. We know that, and also that he will be available for an hour. Departmental officials are available for the full three hours. I have no information on the availability on very short notice to guarantee the participation of the RCMP. We could find out. I think the answer to the question of availability might help inform the rationale to have a meeting on Tuesday or when it can be scheduled. I just don't have that information.

Go ahead, Madam Dancho.

Ms. Raquel Dancho: Just as a point of clarification, my understanding is that the motion was passed in the House, but that formally the Bloc needs to bring forward a motion here that needs to be passed. I just want to confirm that what Ms. Damoff is saying is correct, just to make sure that we don't need to pass the motion here to get the minister here on Thursday, because I thought we did.

Mr. Ron McKinnon: Mr. Chair, I do believe that we have a motion to adjourn on the floor.

The Chair: We do, but it would be good to clarify this, and I think the clerk can help clarify this.

The issue raised is that there has already been a motion passed in the House that includes the participation at further meetings of the minister and the RCMP and others. That motion has already been passed by the House.

We have some further information now about the availability of the minister for next Thursday for an hour. I have no information on the availability of the RCMP, but I will find out, and once I do, then it will be easier to determine the length of the next meeting, which we can agree now will be called for next Thursday. Whether there is a requirement to call a meeting in the interim will depend on the availability of others.

Madame Michaud, go ahead.

• (1755)

[*Translation*]

Ms. Kristina Michaud: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

It's good that the minister is available next Thursday. However, the motion talks about a three-hour period, and I am now being told that he will be available for only one hour.

Can we ensure to hear from him for three hours?

If not, can we plan for him to testify before the committee for another two hours?

[*English*]

The Chair: Madam Damoff, go ahead.

Ms. Pam Damoff: My understanding is that, due to the restrictions with interpreters, we have the room only for two hours on Thursday, and that next week, because all the committees are meeting, we have only one day when this committee can meet, which is Thursday. There is a commitment in the motion passed in the House for three hours, which would mean two hours on Thursday, and then the committee would still be owed an hour at a future date for the minister to come, to fulfill the requirements of the House.

The Chair: My understanding is that it would be cumulative and not necessarily all at the same time.

We have to make a decision now to get back to the House to vote. We also have an adjournment motion on the table. Can we agree that we will adjourn this meeting? I think that as chair I have enough sense of the will of the committee to call the next meeting next week, knowing that the minister will be available. We'll find out in the meantime the availability of others who were mentioned in the House motion.

We have a motion to adjourn this meeting on the floor. Let me put that motion to adjourn to a vote.

(Motion agreed to)

The Chair: We got through the important business for today. The chair will call the next meeting. We have a motion that was passed by the House that will inform the next move.

Thank you very much, everybody. The meeting is adjourned.

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