

COMMISSION FOR STANDARDS IN PUBLIC LIFE
3rd MEETING OF 2020 (HELD VIA TELEPHONE)
MINUTES
28 APRIL 2020

PRESENT: Rosie Whittaker-Myles Chairman
 Sheenah Hislop Member
 Isatou Smith Member

SECRETARIAT MEMBERS PRESENT:

 Deborah Bodden Manager

1. Meeting called to order

The meeting was called to order at 3:05pm.

2. New Business

a. CIG Press Conference of 27 April 2020

Members discussed the concerns aired publicly regarding the response of the Hon. Minister of Health (Minister Dwayne Seymour) to a query by a member of the media (Ms. Wendy Ledger) regarding allegations of a possible breach of the Prevention, Control and Suppression of COVID-19 Regulations (“COVID-19 Regulations”) which had been posted on some media outlets and social media on the preceding weekend relating to the said Minister’s wife. Members agreed that the investigation of any allegation of a breach of the COVID-19 Regulations is a matter for the RCIPS.

That said, Members recognised that while a person in public life, as in this case a Minister, cannot be held responsible for the actions (alleged or actually committed) of an immediate family member, it is important that persons in public life be held to account for their own behaviour, especially when carrying out public duties. Members agreed that it is important for persons in public life to have regard to and adhere to the Seven Principles of Public Life: Selflessness, Integrity, Objectivity, Accountability, Openness, Honesty and Leadership (the “Nolan Principles”). Furthermore the Minister has a duty to promote and support the Nolan Principles through leadership and example.

The Commission felt that it was appropriate for the Minister to be held to account for his actions with respect to Ms. Ledger of CNS.

Moreover, the Commission noted that the importance of freedom of the press to any democracy, particularly in these unprecedented times, cannot be understated.

Having reviewed the exchange between the Minister and Ms. Ledger on 27 April, 2020, the comments of the Hon. Premier during the Press Conference earlier on 28 April, 2020 and the response of Minister Seymour, the Commission considered that an apology was appropriate and expressed hope that all parties could move forward together.

3. Any Other Business

a. Submission of Declarations

Members were informed by the Manager that within the next week the draft Instructions and draft Declaration Forms for both of the categories of Persons in Public Life who are required to submit declarations within 30 days of 30 June 2020, will be circulated to Members for their review and comments. Members agreed to meet once the documents were received and reviewed, and that in the interim a press release should be issued informing the public of these developments.

4. Action Items

The Secretariat was asked to:

- a. Make the requested changes to any of the draft documents and circulate to Members for final agreement; and
- b. Draft and release a statement (as broadly as possible) on the future availability of the documents.

5. Items to be discussed at the next meeting

- a. Draft Instructions
- b. Draft Declaration Forms

6. Next meeting

The next meeting date will be held via Zoom on 20 May 2020 at 3:00pm.

7. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 5:35pm.



Rosie Whittaker-Myles
CHAIRMAN
COMMISSION FOR STANDARDS IN PUBLIC LIFE