

**6th MEETING OF THE
COMMISSION FOR STANDARDS IN PUBLIC LIFE
1 MAY 2024 @ 10:00 AM
MINUTES
VIA ZOOM**

PRESENT: Dr Sonia Bush Chairman (via Zoom)
 J. Rosalie Twohey Member (via Zoom)
 Keith Blake Member (via Zoom)

COMMISSIONS SECRETARIAT MEMBERS PRESENT:
 Melanie McField Manager
 Francis Kearns Deputy Manager
 Lise Hurlstone Research Analyst

1. Meeting called to order

The meeting was called to order at 10:00 am. The Chairman welcomed all in attendance and opened with a prayer.

2. Matters Arising from Previous Minutes

a. Update re Parliamentary Code of Conduct

The Chairman and Member Rosalie Twohey updated Member Keith Blake of the meeting that took place with the Attorney General (AG) regarding the Parliamentary Code of Conduct on 3 April 2024. It was agreed in the meeting that proposed changes to the Code and the Standards in Public Life draft Amendment Bill, which has not yet been finalised, would be documented and circulated to the Commission for consideration. As it has been a month since the meeting and nothing has yet been received the Commission requested that the Secretariat follow-up for a status update and anticipated timeframe for receiving the proposed amendments.

b. Update re Election Observers’ Report

The Commission reviewed correspondence received from the Supervisor of Elections on 26 March indicating that he will be presenting an updated cabinet paper to Caucus on this subject in the next few weeks. He noted this will be the fourth attempt at securing Cabinet approval for drafting instructions for amendments to the Elections Act.

The Manager also updated the Commission of an informal conversation she had with the Deputy Supervisor of Elections, Sheena Glasgow, who indicated that she could

provide further updates on the status of the proposed changes. The Manager also noted she has an upcoming meeting with the Supervisor of Elections on an unrelated matter at the end of May, and so this issue could be raised with him informally at that time.

The Commission considered that waiting until the end of May would be too long, and therefore asked that the Secretariat forward its prior correspondence with the Supervisor of Elections to the Deputy Supervisor of Elections, copying the Supervisor of Elections, and make a formal request for her assistance with updates on the matter going forward.

c. MOUs

i. Anti-Corruption Commission MOU

It was noted that the MOU between the CSPL and ACC was signed by both parties on 17 April and circulated accordingly. The issue of having a formal procedure for the logistics of exchanging information between the entities was discussed. The Secretariat was asked to draft guidelines on this for the Commission's review.

d. CSPL Reports

i. 24th & 25th Reports

The Commission was updated that both of these reports were sent to the Deputy Governor on 22 March, and the Deputy Governor confirmed on 8 April that these have been sent to Parliament. The Commission accordingly requested that the Secretariat post these reports to the CSPL website.

ii. 26th Report

Members provided feedback on the draft 26th Report, which was circulated to them prior to the meeting. Some minor amendments were requested, and Members confirmed that once these changes were made the Report was approved and could be progressed to the Deputy Governor in the usual fashion.

e. PR & Education Initiatives

i. ROI Blog

Members reviewed a draft of a blog post prepared by the PR & Education Coordinator, in preparation for the upcoming ROI annual declaration period in July 2024. The intended audience is new joiners to the civil service and therefore the post will go on the CIG intranet site, the Hub. Members provided some minor changes to the document, and the Deputy Manager indicated that the blog would be posted in accordance with the ROI Comms Plan.

ii. ROI Comms Plan

A comprehensive Comms Plan was presented for the 2024 ROI annual declaration period, and members had the opportunity to review and provide feedback. The Chairman indicated that she was very pleased with the thoroughness of the plan and thanked the Secretariat for its efforts. The Deputy Manager noted that the plan was already in progress as some of the items scheduled had already taken place.

iii. Video Update

The Deputy Manager updated members that the video on the CSPL planned for inclusion in the New Civil Servants Orientation is in progress and they are currently making arrangements for the voiceover. The Commission requested that once the video is completed it is shared with members.

f. Media Articles

i. Intervention criteria

As indicated at the last meeting the Deputy Manager shared the intervention criteria that the Secretariat would use when reviewing news stories to determine whether it was necessary to raise these with the Commission. Members discussed the draft and advised that it was very thorough, no amendments were necessary and they were happy to approve the document for use.

3. Any Other Business

a. New Members

Members inquired after the status of the recruitment of new members, as the Constitution allows for up to 5 members to be appointed to the CSPL, and it was noted that current members terms are set to end in 2025. The Manager updated all that the Secretariat has been working on a new recruitment drive for members via the Expressions of Interest advertisement programme, which began on 26 April. She added that she anticipates having a few names to put forward for consideration at the next quarterly all-chairpersons in May.

b. Non-compliance with ROI

The Chairman raised the issue of needing to finalise the process for identifying and pursuing Persons in Public Life who have not complied with their requirement under the Standards in Public Life Act to file declarations. Members noted that it is important to prioritise reviewing the compliance of Persons in Public Life with annual submissions in descending order, starting with Members of Parliament, Chief Officers, heads of Statutory Authorities, and members of Constitutional Commissions and governing bodies of Statutory Authorities and Government Companies. Once the process is established, consideration will need to be given to how any notices of non-compliance

will be communicated to any Persons in Public Life with potentially overdue declarations.

Members resolved to read up on the statutory requirements to be able to come to a consensus in the near future on what this would look like in practice.

c. Tracking spreadsheet

The Chairman noted that, further to her request for a more detailed historic tracking of actions taken for any given subject considered by the CSPL at last week's meeting, she had reconsidered the issue and determined that she is happy with the current system of tracking work and keeping updated summaries of actions taken for matters before the Commission.

The Secretariat agreed to provide updated work trackers for the Commission to review prior to each meeting.

d. CSPL Minutes

The Chairman asked the Secretariat to confirm that all minutes from 2023 are posted to the CSPL website, and to continue the practice of submitting draft minutes for members consideration promptly.

e. Feedback on the Secretariat

The Manager asked Members for feedback on how the Secretariat has been doing with supporting the Commission in their work. Members provided their views, stating that they are happy with the improvements made in the writing of letters and reports, organisation of documents and meeting packets, historical summaries of subjects, employment of technology, initiative taken in respect of communications, the overall quality of work, and the sense that the team seems to be content and work well together. The Manager thanked Members for their feedback, stressing that there is still lots of room for improvement and the Secretariat will endeavour to further improve the service provided to the Commission.

f. Recent and Upcoming Trials of the Former Speaker of the House

Member Keith Blake raised this matter. It was noted that whilst the recently publicised case against the former Speaker collapsed at the end of February, there is a separate outstanding trial scheduled to begin 24 June. The Chairman raised the provision in the Standards in Public Life Act, section 22, which prevents the Commission from investigating a matter until all other investigations are complete.

Members agreed, however, that the matter should not be forgotten and requested that the Secretariat continue to monitor the news for any updates, and keep this on the

agenda. Additionally, once a judgement in the February 2024 trial is available the Secretariat was asked to circulate it to members.

4. Action Items

Members:

- a. Read up on the statutory requirements to for how to pursue non-compliance with the requirement for Persons in Public Life to file declarations to the Register of Interest, as outlined in item 3.b above.

The Secretariat:

- a. Follow up with the Attorney General's Chambers on the Parliamentary Code of Conduct as outlined in item 2.a. above;
- b. Forward correspondence on the Elections Observers Report recommendations to the Deputy Supervisor of Elections as outlined in item 2.b. above;
- c. Draft guidelines for members to formalise the procedure of sharing information in MOUs, as outlined in item 2.c.i. above;
- d. Post the 24th and 25th CSPL Reports to the website as outlined in item 2.d.i. above;
- e. Amend and progress the 26th Report as outlined in item 2.d.ii above;
- f. Amend the draft ROI Blog post as outlined in item 2.e.i. above;
- g. Circulate CSPL introductory video to members once available as outlined in item 2.e.iii. above;
- h. Provide updated action items tracker prior to CSPL meetings as outlined in item 3.c. above;
- i. Confirm historic minutes are posted on CSPL website as outlined in item 3.d. above;
- j. Continue to provide prompt draft minutes to members as outlined in item 3.d. above;
- k. Add monitoring of the trials of the former Speaker of the House as outlined in item 3.f. above; and
- l. Circulate the judgement on the February 2024 trial of the former Speaker of the House once available as outline din item 3.f. above.

5. Items to be Discussed at the Next Meetings

- a. Update on Policies and Procedures:
 - i. Lateral Flow Tests/Procurement Procedures
 - ii. OAG Investigation into Government Procurement Practices
- b. Update re Parliamentary Code of Conduct
- c. Update re Election Observers' Report
- d. Auditor General MOU
- e. CSPL 26th Report
- f. PR & Education Initiatives
 - i. Video Update
- g. Complaints/Enquiries
 - i. CSPL COMP 001/2023

- h. Conflict of Interest Issues Reported on at the Department of Tourism
- i. Report on Campaign Financing
- j. Recent and Upcoming Trials of the Former Speaker of the House
- k. CCAICACB Membership & Conference

6. Date of the Next meeting

Next meeting will be agreed via round-robin email.

7. Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 11:20 am.



Dr Sonia Bush

CHAIRMAN

COMMISSION FOR STANDARDS IN PUBLIC LIFE