

**4th MEETING OF THE
COMMISSION FOR STANDARDS IN PUBLIC LIFE FOR 2025
8 JULY 2025 @ 2:00 PM
MINUTES
VIA ZOOM**

PRESENT:	Woody Foster	Chairman
	Keith Blake	Member (via Zoom)
	Jay Ehrhart	Member (via Zoom)
	Tonica Williams	Member (via Zoom)

APOLOGIES:	Diana Deopersad	Member
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COMMISSIONS SECRETARIAT MEMBERS PRESENT:

Melanie McField	Manager
Francis Kearns	Deputy Manager
Lise Hurlstone	Research Analyst
Jessica Ebanks	PR & Education Coordinator (in part)

1. Meeting called to order

The meeting was called to order at 2:03 pm. The Chairman noted that all members, except himself, were attending via Zoom. Apologies were noted from Member Diana Deopersad.

2. Minutes from Previous Meeting

a. Meeting held on 22 November 2024

The minutes of the meeting held on 22 November 2024 were reviewed and approved by the Commission. The Secretariat was instructed to upload the approved minutes to the Commission's website.

b. Meeting held on 5 December 2024

The minutes of the meeting held on 5 December 2024 were reviewed and approved by the Commission. The Secretariat was instructed to upload the approved minutes to the Commission's website.

c. Meeting held on 5 February 2025

The minutes of the meeting held on 5 February 2025 were reviewed and approved by the Commission. The Secretariat was instructed to upload the approved minutes to the Commission's website.

d. Meeting held on 8 April 2025

The minutes of the meeting held on 8 April 2025 were reviewed and approved by the Commission. The Secretariat was instructed to upload the approved minutes to the Commission's website.

e. Meeting held on 27 May 2025

The minutes of the meeting held on 27 May 2025 were reviewed and approved by the Commission. It was agreed that, as this was intended to be an internal planning meeting rather than a discussion of Commission business, these minutes would not be uploaded to the Commission's website.

3. New Business

a. Complaints Procedures Update

Members reviewed Secretariat's research on accepting anonymous complaints. Members emphasised the need for increased promotion of the complaints function on the CSPL website, enhancing the complaint form to make certain fields mandatory, and allowing for anonymous complaints where feasible. The option of liaising with other oversight bodies such as the Ombudsman and the Office of the Auditor General on how they process anonymous complaints was suggested. The Secretariat was asked to update the document as necessary and begin carrying out the recommendations.

b. CSPL Strategic Summary

The Strategic Summary document, reviewed following the 27 May planning meeting, was approved by members.

c. Relationship Building

A meeting with the Premier has been proposed for 24 July 2025. Member Tonicia Williams confirmed her availability to attend alongside the Chairman, and the Secretariat will circulate the meeting invitation and agenda accordingly. The Commission intends to discuss the Premier's public commitment to implementing a Parliamentary Code of Conduct, along with amendments to the Standards in Public Life Act and the importance of the Register of Interests at the upcoming meeting. Members will request that a presentation to Cabinet will follow. The Manager will follow up with the Speaker of the House on a meeting now that Parliament has reconvened, as previously requested by him.

4. Matters Arising from Previous Minutes

a. Update: Parliamentary Code of Conduct

The Secretariat summarised its research on the enforcement of sanctions following investigations, noting that standards bodies generally do not enforce investigative recommendations. Notwithstanding this, the Commission discussed what it considered reasonable sanctions should be, including the possibility of publicising the outcome of investigations in specific/limited circumstances.

The Commission asked the Secretariat to inquire with the Cabinet Office whether new MPs are required to sign the Ministerial Code of Conduct upon assuming the functions of their new appointments. This item is to remain high priority in upcoming meetings with both the Premier and the Speaker.

b. PR & Education Initiatives

i. 2025 Election Media Coverage

The PR & Education Officer presented a summary of General Election 2025 media coverage. It was noted that the current Premier campaigned on the promise of implementing a robust Parliamentary Code of Conduct and prioritised Good Governance through enhancements to the Standards in Public Life Act. This will be highlighted in the Commission's meeting with the Premier.

c. Election Reform

Members Tonicia Williams and Diana Deopersad will lead this initiative, with a planning meeting scheduled for the end of July. The Secretariat will circulate the last four Election Observer Reports to Members Williams and Deopersad in preparation for their meeting.

d. Conflict of Interest Issues Reported on at the Department of Tourism

The Secretariat noted that no response has yet been received from the Department of Tourism Director on the Commission's previous correspondence. The Manager and Deputy Manager discussed the matter with the Deputy Governor, who agreed to follow up with the Director of the Department of Tourism. The Commission agreed to allow 14 days for a response. The Secretariat was also asked to outline a standard escalation process with timelines should similar situations arise in the future.

e. Draft MOU with Office of the Auditor General

The Deputy Manager noted to the Commission that he is scheduled to meet with the newly appointed Auditor General, Mr Patrick Smith, to discuss collaboration between the two organisations, especially regarding harmonising the Register of Interests and Notice of Interests systems. A report will be provided to the Commission at the next meeting.

f. Register of Interests Update

i. Update on compliance follow-ups

The Commission agreed for letters to the Appointing Officers of delinquent Persons in Public Life to be sent imminently, with a 2-week response deadline, followed by a 48-hour final notice before fines commence. Read receipts should be enabled for this correspondence. The Secretariat will proceed accordingly.

ii. Declaration Guidance Notes

Members discussed the need for a mechanism to identify individuals serving in

acting roles and suggested requesting a legislative amendment to redefine who qualifies as a Person in Public Life, possibly aligning with the definition of persons required to submit Notices of Interest. It was agreed that this will be considered further.

A further discussion of the suggested changes to the Register of Interests Declaration Guidance Notes was deferred to the next meeting.

iii. Civil Debt Recovery Procedure

Members reviewed the responses from the Debt Recovery Unit requested previously. It was agreed that both payment of fines and fulfilling ROI submission requirements must take place in order to cease fines assessed to delinquent Persons in Public Life. The Secretariat was provided with additional direction on details of carrying out the process for implementing fines, and was asked to liaise with the Debt Recovery Unit representative if any further clarification was needed.

The Deputy Manager also updated Members that a suitable legal advisor had been identified following a standard procurement process, and that final approvals were being sought to sign a contract. The Commission will be updated once the legal advice is received.

g. Complaints/Enquiries

i. CSPL COMP 001/2023

Members agreed to recirculate the case file internally for formal agreement on whether to proceed with an investigation. Should there be insufficient information, the Commission will determine what additional information is required. The Secretariat was asked to send a follow-up letter to the respondent, referencing the Commission's right to investigate.

h. Trials of the Former Speaker of the House

The Deputy Manager advised that the Secretariat continues to await the judgment from the Cayman Islands Court of Appeal on the matter involving Mr W. McKeever Bush, which will be circulated once received.

i. Draft 27th Report

Members requested the report be recirculated via email for further consideration. Members also requested that, once published online, the report be shared with the media.

5. Any Other Business

a. Staffing Changes at the Secretariat

The Manager formally announced to the Commission that Deputy Manager, Mr Francis Kearns, would be departing from the Commissions Secretariat. She advised that Mr Kearns has accepted a new role with the Governor's Office, where he will continue to engage with the Commissions supported by the Secretariat.

The Manager acknowledged the valuable contributions Mr Kearns has made during his tenure with the Secretariat, and noted that this new opportunity is well-deserved. He will be missed by Secretariat staff and Commission Members. The Manager further advised that she is actively working on a plan to ensure continued high-level support for the Commissions and will keep members updated on transitional arrangements.

6. Action Items

Members will:

- a. Review CSPL COMP 001/2023 complaint case file for decision, as outlined in item 4.g.i. above.

The Secretariat will:

- a. Upload approved minutes to the CSPL website, as outlined in items 2.a.-d. above;
- b. Update and carry out Complaints Procedures, as outlined in item 3.a. above;
- c. Coordinate meeting invitations, as outlined in item 3.c. above;
- d. Draft agenda for meeting with Premier on 24 July including campaign promises and Parliamentary Code of Conduct, as outlined in items 3.c., 4.a and 4.b.i. above;
- e. Follow up with the Speaker of the House regarding a meeting with the CSPL, as outlined in item 3.c. above;
- f. Inquire with Cabinet Office regarding new MPs signing on to the Ministerial Code; as outlined in item 4.a. above;
- g. Circulate the four most recent Election Observer Reports to members, as outlined in item 4.c. above;
- h. Follow up with the Director of the Department of Tourism if required, as outlined in item 4.d. above;
- i. Draft escalation procedure for non-response to CSPL correspondence, as outlined in item 4.d.;
- j. Report back to the CSPL on meeting with the Auditor General, as outlined in item 4.e. above;
- k. Issue appointing officer letters with deadlines and read receipts, as outlined in item 4.f.i. above;
- l. Liaise with Nathania Pearson on debt recovery procedures as necessary, as outlined in item 4.f.iii. above;
- m. Circulate legal advice on civil debt recovery as outlined in item 4.f.iii. above;
- n. Recirculate CSPL COMP 001/2023 complaint case file for decision, as outlined in item 4.g.i. above;
- o. Draft and send follow-up letter to responded in CSPL COMP 001/2023, as outlined in

item 4.g.i. above;

- p. Circulate 27th Report to members for review, as outlined in item 4.i. above; and
- q. Confirm approved and tabled CSPL reports to the media, as outlined in item 4.i. above.

7. Items to be Discussed at the Next Meetings

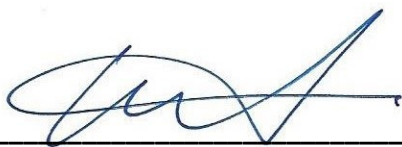
- a. Update: Parliamentary Code of Conduct
- b. PR & Education Initiatives
- c. Update: Election Observers' Report / Campaign Financing
- d. Conflict of Interest Issues Reported on at the Department of Tourism
- e. Draft MOU with Office of the Auditor General
- f. Register of Interests Update
 - i. Update on compliance follow-ups
 - ii. ROI Examination Procedure
 - iii. Declaration Guidance Notes
 - iv. Civil Debt Recovery Procedure
- g. Complaints/Enquiries
 - i. CSPL COMP 001/2023
- h. Trials of the Former Speaker of the House
- i. CSPL Strategy Meeting
- j. Draft 27th Report

8. Next Meeting

The next meeting is scheduled for 9 September 2025 at 2:00 pm.

9. Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 4:07 pm.



Woodrow Foster

CHAIRPERSON

COMMISSION FOR STANDARDS IN PUBLIC LIFE