

Review of Statutory Offices of the House of Assembly

Honourable Robert Fowler

NEWS RELEASE

The Honourable Robert Fowler is inviting input from the public in the review of the statutory offices of the House of Assembly.

Citizens with direct experience with the offices of the Commissioner for Legislative Standards, Chief Electoral Officer, Child and Youth Advocate, Citizens' Representative, the Information and Privacy Commissioner, and/or the Seniors' Advocate are especially encouraged to offer comment. The Office of the Auditor General is not included in the review.

The review will look at the structure and administration of the six offices as set out in the terms of reference. This is not a fault-finding mission or an examination into the behaviour of any person: it is a forward-looking policy review. The review is strictly bound by the limits of its terms of reference. It will be conducted under the umbrella of independence and impartiality; concepts which will be rigorously upheld.

Any member of the public who wishes to comment is encouraged to submit a written submission by email to info@rsonl.ca by July 17, 2023. If possible, submissions should be in Portable Document Format (PDF). Include your name and organization name on the document, where applicable. Personal contact information (address, telephone number) should be provided within the body of the email. Submissions may also be mailed or hand delivered to 3rd Floor, Gosling Building, 285 Duckworth Street, St. John's, NL A1C 1G9.

Information updates will appear on the Review's website www.rsonl.ca and its Twitter account @NLStatReview. Written submissions will be posted on the Review's website as they are received. Personal contact information will not be posted.

Citizens who have special circumstances that inhibit supplying a written submission should, at the earliest opportunity, contact Diane Blackmore, Chief Administrative Officer, by email at info@rsonl.ca or by telephone at 709-729-8866.

Written submissions are strongly encouraged. Where necessary, a request for an in-person, telephone or video meeting should be made to Ms. Blackmore. If such a meeting occurs, a written digest will be posted on our website soon thereafter.

To support this work, the Honourable Robert Fowler has engaged Michael Collins, Co-Counsel; Adrienne Ding, Co-Counsel; Dr. Alex Marland, Political Scientist; and Diane Blackmore, Chief Administrative Officer, to assist in the research and development of its mandate. Bios for each are included below.

The review is anticipated to take approximately six months.

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11:00 a.m.

BIOS

The Honourable Robert Fowler was appointed to the Provincial Court of Newfoundland and Labrador as a Magistrate in 1977. Following his duties in Gander and Woody Point, he was appointed to the Provincial Court of Grand Falls-Windsor where he remained until 2000. In 2000, he was appointed by the Government of Canada to the Supreme Court of Newfoundland and Labrador in Happy Valley-Goose Bay. In 2007, he moved to St. John's where he sat in the Trial Division and the Unified Family Court. Justice Fowler retired in September of 2020 after forty-four years as a Judge.

Michael Collins

Mr. Collins was originally called to the bar in Ontario in 2010 and transferred to the Law Society of Newfoundland and Labrador in 2012. He is a civil litigator practicing with Tupman & Bloom LLP in St. John's, NL. His previous experience includes serving as a law clerk at the Supreme Court of Canada, a research lawyer at the Newfoundland and Labrador Court of Appeal, and Associate Counsel at the Muskrat Falls Inquiry. Michael has co-authored several journal articles with the Honourable Malcolm Rowe and is a member of the Court of Appeal Rules Committee, the SS Daisy Committee, the Canadian Bar Association, and the Advocates' Society.

Adrienne Ding

Ms. Ding was admitted to the Bar in Ontario in 2014 and the Bar of Newfoundland and Labrador in 2015, having obtained her J.D. from Dalhousie University in 2013. She is legal counsel with the firm of O'Dea Earle in St. John's where she practices labour and employment law and civil litigation. She also contributes to the legal profession as a member of the Judicial Advisory Committee, a board member of the Federation of Asian Canadian Lawyers, Atlantic Chapter, and a member of the Canadian Bar Association.

Dr. Alex Marland

Dr. Marland is a Professor of Political Science at Memorial University. He is the author or lead editor of multiple books, including *First Among Unequals: The Premier, Politics, and Policy in Newfoundland and Labrador* (MQUP, 2014) and *The Democracy Cookbook: Recipes to Renew Governance in Newfoundland and Labrador* (MUP, 2017), as well as *Brand Command: Canadian Politics and Democracy in the Age of Message Control* (UBC, 2016) which won the Donner Prize and an Atlantic book award. From 2003 to 2006 he was a public servant in the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador. Beginning July 2023 he will be the inaugural Jarislowsky Chair in Trust and Political Leadership at Acadia University, in Nova Scotia.

Diane Blackmore

Ms. Blackmore has worked in the administrative field with the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador for approximately 40 years. She has extensive experience working with Commissions/Inquiries, ie. St. John's Urban Region (Agriculture) Development Area Review Commission, Newfoundland and Labrador Electoral Districts Boundaries Commission, Commission of Inquiry on Hormone Receptor Testing, Commission of Inquiry Respecting the Death of Donald Dunphy, and the Commission of Inquiry Respecting the Muskrat Falls Project.

Terms of Reference

The Consultant shall review the structure of the Statutory Offices of the House of Assembly, with the exception of the Office of the Auditor General, and prepare a report that includes recommendations for the following:

- The minimum required competencies for each statutory officer;
- The number of statutory offices and whether a statutory officer could fulfil the obligations of more than one statutory role; which offices/statutory officers could be combined based on common objectives, functions, qualifications, clients etc.;
- Whether each Statutory Office requires the dedication of a full-time statutory officer or whether it could be part-time or on an as-needed basis;
- How each statutory officer should be recruited, appointed, re-appointed, compensated, disciplined, and removed from office;

- How to manage conflicts which arise between Statutory Offices, who should investigate alleged misconduct of a statutory officer, and how that investigation should be conducted (internally, externally, independent ADR etc.).
- Whether and how quality assurance and performance of each statutory officer/Statutory Office should be measured and overseen;
- What is an appropriate administrative oversight model for the Statutory Offices, inclusive of financial management, human resources management, information management, procurement, and any other “back office” functions; structure;
- Whether physical space and administrative functions could be shared among Statutory Offices; and
- Where reports from each Statutory Office should be directed, such as whether any of the reports of the Statutory Offices should go to a standing or select committee of the House of Assembly for review and analysis.

The Consultant may seek input from current and former statutory officers, the Clerk of the House of Assembly, the Clerk of the Executive Council, the Management Commission of the House of Assembly and any others that may be necessary to inform the Terms of Reference.