



**Summary of Proceedings
Public Hearing**

*Joint Select Committee on Local Authorities, Service Commissions and Statutory Authorities
(including the THA)*

held on
Wednesday April 26th, 2017

Subject matter: Inquiry into the efficiency and effectiveness of the Public Service Commission.

Objectives of the inquiry

The objectives of the inquiry were:

- i. To evaluate the performance of the Commission in executing its mandate.
- ii. To determine whether the resources, systems and procedures of the Public Service Commission are sufficient to allow it to operate efficiently.
- iii. To determine the challenges affecting the operations of the Commission and the possible solutions for alleviating these challenges.

Venue: The hearing was held on Wednesday April 26th, 2017 from 10:10 a.m. to 11:55 p.m. in the J. Hamilton Maurice Room, Mezzanine Floor, Office of the Parliament, Tower D, The Port of Spain International Waterfront Centre, 1A Wrightson Road, Port-of-Spain.

Committee members

The following committee members were present:

- i. Mr. H. R. Ian Roach (Chairman)
- ii. Ms. Ramona Ramdial, MP (Vice-Chairman)
- iii. Mr. Nigel De Freitas
- iv. Ms. Khadijah Ameen

Witnesses who appeared

The following officials of the Public Service Commission appeared before the Committee:

- Mrs. Maureen Manchouck Chairman, Public Service Commission
- Mrs. Parvatee Anmolsingh-Mahabir Deputy Chairman, Public Service Commission
- Mr. Clive Pegus Member, Public Service Commission
- Mr. Martin Franklin Member, Public Service Commission
- Ms. Kay Charles Member, Public Service Commission
- Ms. Anastasius V. Creed Director of Personnel Administration
- Ms. Prabhawatie Maraj Deputy Director of Personnel Administration
- Mrs. Marcia Pile O’Brady Deputy Director of Personnel Administration
- Ms. Natasha Seecharan Legal Adviser
- Mrs. Ramdai Sookdeo Executive Director, HRM
- Mrs. Coomarie Goolabsingh Executive Director, HRM
- Ms. Allison Hughes Director of Corporate Services

The following officials of the Office of the Prime Minister were also in attendance:

- Ms. Sandra Jones Permanent Secretary
- Ms. Nicha Cardinez-Rostant Director, Legal Services

Officials of the Ministry of Public Administration and Communications were also in attendance:

- Ms. Joan Mendez Permanent Secretary
- Mr. Kurt Meyer Deputy Permanent Secretary (Ag.)

Key Issues Discussed

The following are the key subject areas/issues discussed during the hearing:

- i. The constitutional mandate of the PSC;
- ii. The role of the SCD in providing technical advice and support to the PSC;
- iii. There are approximately 27,000 to 30,000 public servants who serve an aggregate of 23 ministries;
- iv. The inability of the PSC to be effective because it operates with a paper based system;
- v. The negative impact the lack of financial resources has on the operations of the SCD;
- vi. The number of officers acting in vacant positions;
- vii. The lack of succession planning for senior officials within the public service;
- viii. The relevance of the PSC;

- ix. The need for oversight of the execution of delegated authority by Ministries and departments;
- x. The need for a Comprehensive Study to determine whether the public service is overstaffed or understaffed;
- xi. The number of contract positions in the Public Service is approximately 13,800;
- xii. The PSC has to engage in the realignment of staff when a Ministry is restructured which is time consuming and adversely affects other areas of its operations;
- xiii. The possibility of the reconciling of the Special project to fill vacancies with the existing environment;
- xiv. The total number of vacancies stand at approximately 10,000 that comprises 4,551 Generic Offices and 4,636 Specific Offices;
- xv. The re-integration of PSs and public servants into Ministries following the realignment of Ministerial responsibilities;
- xvi. The measures being taken to prevent further instances of public servants being by-passed for promotion/acting;
- xvii. The status of the revised regulations;
- xviii. The lack of adequate consultations by the PSC on the revised Regulations particularly with the relevant Trade Unions and the Law Association of Trinidad and Tobago;
- xix. The timeframe for the validity of the PSC's order of merit lists;
- xx. The policy for a retired PS to be re-employed in the Public Service;
- xxi. Whether there is a stipulated timeframe for training persons with regards to succession planning;
- xxii. The reason for the regular reassignment of PSs to different Ministries;
- xxiii. The length of time it takes to transition from an active employee to a pensioner;
- xxiv. Whether officers are encouraged to track their records on a continuous basis to ensure smooth transitioning from employment to retirement pension;
- xxv. The procedure involved in treating with complaints submitted by members of the public to the PSC;
- xxvi. The inherent challenges involved in sourcing records to deal with complaints submitted by members of the public;
- xxvii. The methods utilised by the SCD to manage pre-action protocol proceedings;
- xxviii. The need for additional legal officers at the Service Commissions Department;

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- xxix. The need to complete the implementation of the SCD's electronic database;
- xxx. The measures taken to realise improvements in the submission of performance appraisals by Ministries and departments;
- xxxi. Whether a timeline for submission of Performance Appraisal for PSs can be imposed;
- xxxii. The delays in the payments of increments to officers who were exonerated following disciplinary proceedings;
- xxxiii. Whether a policy specific to the differently-able exists within the public service;
- xxxiv. The number of persons with disabilities who are employed in the Public Service;
- xxxv. The reduction in PSC visits to Tobago due to a lack of funds;
- xxxvi. The meagre funds allocated to the SCD's Employee Assistance Programme;
- xxxvii. The need for the PSC to be adequately resourced as a requirement for the body to improve its performance;
- xxxviii. The need to implement a mental health policy for the public service given the increasing levels of stress among the work force; and
- xxxix. Certain complaints levied against public officers should be addressed at the level of the Ministry/Department.

The hearing can be viewed on our YouTube channel via the following link:

<https://youtu.be/LIPkSV2TZQg>

Contact the Committee's Secretary

You may contact the Committee's Secretary at jsclasasc@tparliament.org or [624-7275 Ext. 2283](tel:624-7275)

Committees Unit

Friday 28th April 2017