



Public Hearing Summary

Wednesday, May 29, 2019

Committee Members:

The following Committee Members were present at the meeting:

- Mrs. Bridgid Annisette-George - Chairman
- Mr. Clarence Rambharat - Member
- Mrs. Ayanna Webster-Roy - Member
- Mr. Daniel Dookie - Member
- Brig. Gen. (Ret.) Ancil Antoine - Member
- Ms. Nicole Olivierre - Member

Witnesses who appeared:

Ministry of Communications

- Mrs. Nataki Atiba-Dilchan - Permanent Secretary (Ag.)
- Ms. Savitri Balkran - Deputy Permanent Secretary (Ag.)
- Ms. Avril Belfon - Government Archivist
- Mr. Rolly Parahoo - Government Printer
- Ms. Enez Moore - Senior Human Resource Officer (Ag.)
- Ms. Rachael Roberts - Account I (Ag.)
- Mr. Shivanand Latchu - Auditor I (Ag.)

Key Issues Discussed

Ministry of Communications (MOC)

General Issues

1. The role of the Ministry in creating a more open Government by informing the population about the Government and its Ministries' activities;
2. The absence of the Ministry's vision and mission statement;
3. The status of the Ministry's Strategic Plan;
4. The establishment of an Evaluation Panel to review the Ministry's Strategic Plan;
5. The status of the completion of the Ministry's website-which is scheduled to be published by the end of May 2019;
6. Details on the challenges faced by the Ministry since its separation from the Ministry of Public Administration (MPA);
7. The challenges faced by the MOC in fulfilling its mandate owing to staff shortage;
8. The number of vacant positions on the establishment of the MOC;
9. The need for an evaluation of the current vacant positions in the MOC;
10. The Ministry's attempts to fill key vacant positions;
11. The absence of a Procurement Unit within the Ministry;
12. Details surrounding the Ministry's recent move to its new location;
13. The MPA role in ensuring that the MOC's pension and leave records since the separation is accurate and up-to-date;
14. The Ministry's approved organizational structure currently being reviewed by the Public Management Consulting Division (PMCD);
15. ;
16. The need to establish guidelines for Ministries/Departments when there is a separation of Ministries;
17. The absence of key administrative staff in the Human Resource Unit of the Ministry;
18. The Ministry engaging in month to month contracts; and
19. The review of the Treasury Division, Ministry of Finance (MOF) of the MOC's accounting system.

1. The absence of the following policies/ protocol:
 - Project Management Protocol;
 - Risk Management Policy;
 - Internal Fraud Policy; and
 - Whistle-blower Policy.
2. The absence of a direct reporting relationship between MOC, State Enterprises and Statutory Boards under the Ministry's purview; and
3. The submission of expenditure statements from external agencies to the Permanent Secretary on a monthly basis.

Non-compliance

1. Minor instances of non-compliance recorded by the Ministry.

Internal Audit

1. The inadequate staffing of the Internal Audit Unit;
2. Efforts made by the Ministry to fill vacant positions in the Internal Audit Unit;
3. The establishment of the Ministry's own Internal Audit function since its separation;
4. The annual work plan of the Internal Audit Unit; and
5. The implementation of an assets management system to track and monitor the Ministry's assets.

Recurrent Expenditure Allocation

09- Rent /Lease -Vehicles and Equipment

1. No rental/lease of vehicles by the Ministry,
2. All vehicles utilized by the Ministry is state-owned;
3. The use of fleet system as a mechanism to monitor the use of vehicles; and
4. The monthly rental of photocopier machines by the Ministry.

27- Official Overseas travel

1. The absence of a documented policy that governs official overseas travel of employees.

62- Promotions, Publicity, and Printing

1. The absence of guidelines to ensure that the message from the Ministry is consistent and reaches its target.

002- Government Printery

1. The role of the Government Printery in achieving the Ministry's mandate;
2. The number of vacant positions at the Government Printery;
3. The current staff complement of the Government Printery and the ideal complement of staff required; and
4. A report on the restructuring of the Government Printery submitted to PMCD for review.

004- Freedom of Information Unit

1. The inadequate staffing of the Freedom of Information Unit and its negative impact on its ability to carry out its responsibilities effectively; and
2. The absence of a Senior Freedom Administrator on the establishment of the Unit.

04- Office of the Information Commissioner

1. The status on the establishment of the Office of the Information Commissioner.

04 Current Transfers and Subsidies

001-Transfers to State Enterprises

1. The retention of unspent subvention funds and the basis of authority for such; and
2. Statements of expenditure of State Enterprises being submitted to MOF on a monthly basis.

Development Programme- Consolidated Funds

1. A status update on the NALIS' Distance Learning Scholarship Programme.

Infrastructure Development Funds

1. The present status of the construction of new Libraries under IDF projects;
2. A status update on the emergency works at National Achieves and Records Center;
3. The role of NALIS and the University of the West Indies in the oversight of the restoration of the Heritage Library; and
4. Challenges faced by the MOC with regards to the completion of projects owing to outstanding payments.

View the Hearing:

The hearing can be viewed on our YouTube Channel, ParlView via the following link:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=onDO7VwDhfc>

Next Meeting:

The next Public Hearing of the Committee will be held on **Thursday, June 13, 2019**, at 1:30 p.m.

PAAC Secretariat

May 29, 2019