



COMMITTEE ON PROCEDURES

MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS

Wednesday 2 December 2020
ROOM 29, PARLIAMENT BUILDINGS AND VIDEO-CONFERENCE

Present: Ms Linda Dillon MLA (Chairperson)
Mr Thomas Buchanan MLA (Deputy Chairperson)
Ms Nicola Brogan MLA

Video-Conference: Mrs Rosemary Barton MLA
Mr Maurice Bradley MLA
Ms Sinéad Bradley MLA
Mr Gerry Carroll MLA
Mr Gary Middleton MLA

In attendance: Nick Mitford (Committee Clerk)
Stewart Kennedy (Assistant Assembly Clerk)
Joanne Keenan (Clerical Assistant)

Apologies: Mr John O'Dowd MLA

The meeting commenced in open session at 2.31pm.

The Committee Clerk informed Members that he had received notification from Mr John O'Dowd MLA that he had nominated the Chairperson to vote on his behalf.

The Chairperson welcomed Nicola Brogan MLA as a new Member on the Committee.

1. Apologies

As above.

2. Draft Minutes

Agreed: The Committee agreed the minutes of the meeting held on Wednesday 18 November 2020.

3. Matters Arising

3.1 The Chairperson advised members that the Clerk received late procedural advice in respect of the temporary provisions and the 9.30am deadline for nominating a proxy.

The Chairperson informed Members that the advice suggested that it would be more satisfactory to amend temporary Standing Order 112 to reflect the position of the Committee rather than suggesting the Speaker shows his discretion.

Agreed: The Committee agreed for the Clerk to re-draft the letter to the Speaker and to seek legal advice on a draft motion to amend Standing Order 112.

3.2 The Chairperson reminded Members that the temporary provisions to allow the Assembly to continue its business during the COVID restrictions are due to expire on 31 January 2021.

Agreed: The Committee agreed for the Clerk to arrange for a draft motion to be brought to the next meeting, seeking to extend the temporary provisions until Summer 2021.

4. Proxy Voting

The Committee considered an options paper from the Clerk which set out potential ways forward for the Committee in respect of proxy voting.

During discussions, the Committee considered the following options:

- A) Do nothing and keep Standing Orders and permanent proxy voting as they currently are – Standing Order 27(11);
- B) Permanently put in place Standing Order 112 which is the current temporary provision for proxy voting as result of Covid-19; and

- C) A more considered approach containing parental leave and/or medical absence outside of Covid-19.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to defer its decision until the next meeting.

5. Legislative Consent Motions

The Chairperson advised Members that there are still a number of political parties who have not yet provided their views on the Committee's Inquiry on the Legislative Consent Motion procedures.

The Chairperson reminded Members of the importance of the Inquiry, and that the Committee must have parties' views as it moves forward with its Inquiry.

Agreed: Following discussions, the Committee agreed to defer its consideration of responses and to give the remaining political parties the opportunity to provide their responses for the next meeting.

Agreed: The Committee agreed for the Clerk to schedule a briefing from Assembly officials in the New Year.

Agreed: The Committee agreed for the Clerk to arrange evidence sessions with counterparts in Scotland, Wales, Westminster and The Executive Office after the Christmas recess period.

6. Correspondence

There was no correspondence to consider.

7. Forward Work Programme

The Chairperson advised Members that, if agreed, the next Committee meeting will be the last meeting before the Christmas recess period.

The Chairperson informed Members that, at this stage, the agenda will include an update on submissions regarding LCMs, as well as any update on Hybrid Proceedings, a draft motion to extend Standing Orders 110-116 and a draft motion to amend Standing Order 112.

With the conclusion (for now) of the Committee's work on Members' Statements, and with the work on new arrangements for permanent

Proxy Voting reaching its conclusion soon, the Chairperson suggested that the Committee also revisits its strategic working plan at the next meeting.

Agreed: The Committee agreed for the Clerk to include the current strategic plan in the next meeting pack and for the Committee to consider its priorities and how it wished to proceed in the New Year.

8. Chairperson's Business

The Chairperson reminded Members that she wrote to the Speaker to inform him that the Committee had agreed to re-consider amending Standing Orders to allow for hybrid proceedings in the Assembly chamber and to arrange a meeting with officials.

The Chairperson informed Members that Officials have since been in contact and the Clerk is in the process of arranging a suitable time for the Chairperson and the deputy Chairperson to meet with Officials in the next few days.

The Chairperson will update the Committee once the meeting has been taken place.

9. Any other Business

There was no other business.

10. Date, time and place of next meeting

Agreed: It was agreed that the next meeting of the Committee would take place on Wednesday 16 December 2020 at 2.30pm in Room 29.

The Chairperson adjourned the meeting at 2.57pm.