

# PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY



Speaker: Hon. Colin LaVie

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## Standing Committee on Poverty in PEI

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**DATE OF HEARING:** 5 SEPTEMBER 2019

**MEETING STATUS:** PUBLIC

**LOCATION:** LEGISLATIVE CHAMBER, HON. GEORGE COLES BUILDING, CHARLOTTETOWN

**SUBJECT:** ELECTION OF CHAIR AND WORK PLAN

**COMMITTEE:**

Trish Altass, MLA Tyne Valley-Sherbrooke [Chair]  
Hannah Bell, MLA Charlottetown-Belvedere  
Sonny Gallant, MLA Evangeline-Miscouche  
Hon. Ernie Hudson, Minister of Social Development and Housing  
Natalie Jameson, MLA Charlottetown-Hillsborough Park (replaces Sidney MacEwen, MLA Morell-Mermaid)  
Gordon McNeilly, MLA Charlottetown-West Royalty

**COMMITTEE MEMBERS ABSENT:**

Sidney MacEwen, MLA Morell-Donagh

**MEMBERS IN ATTENDANCE:**

none

**GUESTS:**

none

**STAFF:**

Emily Doiron, Clerk Assistant (Journals, Committees and House Operations)



The Committee met at 1:30 p.m.

**Clerk Assistant:** Hi everyone and welcome to the first meeting of the Special Committee on Poverty in PEI. My name is Emily Doiron; I'm the committee clerk for this committee.

You have an agenda before you and the first order of business in the nomination and election of a Chair for this committee. So, what I'm going to do at this time is open the floor for nominations for the position of Chair for the committee.

Hannah Bell.

**Ms. Bell:** (Indistinct) nominate Trish Altass for the Chair.

**Clerk Assistant:** All right, do you accept the nomination?

**Ms. Altass:** (Indistinct)

**Clerk Assistant:** Are there any other nominations for Chair of the committee?

Sonny Gallant.

**Mr. Gallant:** I'd like to nominate Hannah. With reason for doing this, is Motion No. 36 was brought forward by Hannah and it was seconded by Peter and I just thought she'd make a good Chair as it was something that was acted on, on your behalf. So, I'd just like to nominate her.

**Clerk Assistant:** Thank you.

I'll ask if Hannah Bell accepts the nomination for Chair.

**Ms. Bell:** I really do appreciate the nomination, Sonny. I appreciate the recognition of this. I'm already the Chair of the rules committee. Though I would love to be Chair on this, but I think it would be a better spread of workload to look for somebody who is not currently Chairing, but who has an interest and expertise in the area and my colleague Trish, is absolutely the person who has that. We work closely together and I have great confidence in her capacity, so I would respectfully decline your nomination.

But, thank you.

**Clerk Assistant:** I'll call on Minister Hudson.

**Mr. Hudson:** Yes, thank you, Chair.

I think you look at the makeup of this committee, that any of the members on the committee could quite comfortably and do a great job as Chair, I do appreciate Sonny putting Hannah's name forward as Chair. I would, personally certainly be comfortable with Hannah or Trish.

But again with regard to Hannah, I know that she has tremendous background knowledge, has tremendous passion for what the committee overall is going to be looking at as we move forward. I just would like to say, either Trish or Hannah, I would fully support. Hannah has declined, but I would ask: Would you reconsider at all?

**Ms. Bell:** What I will do is, I will commit to being a fully present and committed member of the committee and bring my best knowledge and experience to bear in that capacity.

But at this point, I will still decline (Indistinct) Chair.

**Clerk Assistant:** Thank you.

I will look for any other nominations for Chair, at this point.

**Mr. Gallant:** (Indistinct) nomination (Indistinct) or if I'm not nominating somebody.

**Clerk Assistant:** Sure, if you'd like –

Sonny.

**Mr. Gallant:** No disrespect to member, Altass. I think she'd make a fine Chair as well.

Thank you.

**Clerk Assistant:** Thank you for your interventions, members.

At this point, I'll close nominations. We have one nomination on the floor.

All those in favour for Trish Altass as Chair of the Special Committee on Poverty, please signify by saying 'aye.'

**Some Hon. Members:** Aye!

**Clerk Assistant:** And contrary minded 'nay.'

All right, I will welcome Trish Altass to the Chair and turn over the meeting to her.

**Chair (Altass):** All right, well thank you so much everyone.

I guess I'll just start by saying that it certainly means a lot to me to be chairing this committee. Looking at issues around poverty is something that has been important to me in my research work, as well as in a volunteer capacity, so I'm really looking forward to the work that we're going to get to do here together around this.

So, we've done the nomination and election of the Chair, so now we need to adopt the agenda.

**Mr. Gallant:** (Indistinct)

**Chair:** Sonny Gallant moves to adopt the agenda.

All in favour?

**Some Hon. Members:** Aye!

**Chair:** Opposed?

All right, the agenda is adopted.

So, moving on to consideration of the committee's work plan; of course this committee, as was already mentioned, has been established based on a motion that was brought forward and there are some pretty clear guidelines for what we would like to achieve with this committee within a 12-month period.

I'm not sure if this is the appropriate time to address the 12-month issue, where does the 12 months start, technically? Does it start as of today with our first committee meeting or as of the motion passing? I don't know if that's a decision we make as a committee, or how that could be interpreted.

**Clerk Assistant:** It's there in the motion right? Oh yes, 12 months, yeah.

I think probably consider it from the point that the motion was passed and agreed to by the Legislative Assembly, which was July 11, 2019.

**Chair:** From the point, okay.

Yes, Mr. Hudson.

**Mr. Hudson:** Just for clarification on the date that it was passed, July 11, would we, as a committee, that 12-month period that we are speaking with regard to the report of the committee, will be presented to the Legislature, correct? So that would be in the fall sitting of 2020.

Just again for clarification, will that give us a bit of leeway as far as an extra couple of months to complete our work or not?

**Clerk Assistant:** That is an excellent question. I guess no matter which way the committee interprets the motion that July, or September, which we're in now, the House usually is not sitting, so the report does have to be presented to the House and that might be something the committee wishes to submit an interim report in the next sitting might seek clarity in the report from the House on that. I guess it's not a 'yes' or 'no' answer which every way, but that might be a way the committee decides to move forward if they want to, if there's kind of some question about that timeline.

**Chair:** Right. Okay, thank you.

Thank you for bringing that forward Minister Hudson. I think that considering that you know, 12 months is a pretty restrictive amount of time, we want to be clear about where the deadlines are because we're going to want our work plan to reflect that. Perhaps we can get some clarity, I guess.

**Clerk Assistant:** Sure, I'll look into it and gets some clarity on that.

**Chair:** Perfect, all right.

Just to note, we have Natalie Jameson here in for Sidney MacEwen for today's meeting.

Is that just for today's meeting or is it a switch?

**Ms. Jameson:** (Indistinct) for today and then potentially going forward as well but for – yeah.

**Chair:** Wonderful, well welcome, thank you for being here.

We did have a request from Sidney MacEwen via email letting us know if the opportunity with former senator Hugh Segal coming to Prince Edward Island – I believe it was October 3<sup>rd</sup> was the date, or around then, that he had brought forward as a possible date for meeting with minister Segal.

Yes, Minister Hudson.

**Mr. Hudson:** Thank you, Chair.

The request that was circulated by Sidney MacEwen, I certainly would speak strongly in favour of calling former senator, Hugh Segal, as a witness.

If you look at his background at the fact that he was the lead with regard to the pilot project on basic income guarantee in Ontario. He certainly is very passionate about this subject.

I don't know if you're looking for a motion to call former senator Segal forward, but if so, I would be more than happy to make that.

**Chair:** Would that be the appropriate next step, would be a motion? Does anybody else want to – Sonny did you have something you want to add?

**Mr. Gallant:** Motion, I agree. We should invite him out.

**Chair:** I guess if you want to make a formal motion then?

**Mr. Hudson:** I move that the standing committee call as a witness former senator Hugh Segal.

**Chair:** All right.

Hannah Bell.

**Ms. Bell:** (Indistinct) I think we had seen in the – for the benefit of the record – the email that had been circulated indicated that Mr. Segal was traveling here anyway, so there is not a cost associated with his travel while he's here. He's adding this in as something that he does while he's on the Island anyway.

So there's a really good reason to be able to accommodate it, whereas, there are no costs directed incurred for the committee to have Mr. Segal come and speak to us, which is a good thing.

**Chair:** Absolutely. Thank you for highlighting that, Hannah. Yes, that makes sense.

All right, so we have a motion on the floor then to invite former senator Hugh Segal on October 3<sup>rd</sup> to our meeting.

All in favour?

**Some Hon. Members:** Aye!

**Chair:** Opposed?

All right, so that motion passes. So we have the first item on our work plan there; very good.

So moving forward then to new business.

As was mentioned, the work plan of this committee is going to be very much focused on the resolutions – or the points in the motion that we are to be working toward within that 12-month period.

It looks to me that there are sort of three key points: one being establishing clear definitions and measures of poverty; the second being establishing or defining a living wage for Prince Edward Island; and the third being fully costed recommendations regarding the creation of a basic income guarantee pilot for Prince Edward Island.

That's how I'm seeing those three key points, is that – everyone sees it that way?

Okay, so I suppose all the – everything we're bringing forward as items for our work plan will need to be within those – working toward those three goals.

As well, one of the questions I had asked Emily in advance was around funding for possibly having experts come in, as well as research support, that we will likely need at some point to calculate a living wage and perhaps for other pieces around the guaranteed income.

Anything that's going to cost money, and you're probably all aware of this, but I will just state that for the record, we're going to need to have passed in the Legislature in the fall. As we're creating our work plan, anything that we are planning to do over the next couple of months can't require additional costs.

So we can think of it that way, as well as what pieces will we need to put in place early on so that we can achieve the goals farther down the line. I think those are the pieces that we'll have to consider.

**Ms. Bell:** Can I ask, I know there'd been again some offline discussion about this, but in the interim we have the regular tools of the Legislative Assembly support available. So research and, is technology in terms of Skyping, in?

Is that something that's available if we have people we want to hear from who are not able to join us and we can't cover costs?

**Clerk Assistant:** I can speak to that.

**Chair:** Yes, please.

**Clerk Assistant:** Yes, so we have done some testing for, I guess, video conferencing in potential witnesses that the committee might like to hear from and we've worked – we've been testing with Skype and it has – the tests have gone well.

What I would recommend – and just so that if these are public meetings in order to ensure that the broadcast runs smoothly with Skyping somebody in, I would just maybe have like a quick training session with members of the committee just so that we can make sure that the broadcast of the meeting goes as well, as having someone Skype in.

We would do a test beforehand with the presenter and we would probably like to have a test or just kind of a little bit of

training with the committee just we'll – because we have to play with the volume and the microphones in the Chamber.

But it is a possibility, and so for witnesses that are unable to make it into the Chamber here it's definitely a possibility that we can look at.

**Chair:** Minister Hudson.

**Mr. Hudson:** Yes, thank you, Chair.

Excellent point, that this is without a doubt a major undertaking as far as the resources that ultimately will be required so that we do the absolute best job that I know that we will do. As members of the committee mostly likely are aware, that there was substantial consultation carried out by my department, by my predecessor, former minister Mundy, and that was in preparation of the Poverty Reduction Action Plan. Certainly, my department, we are more than happy to provide the information that was gathered during that consultation process.

And just to finish up and number – like all of the committee members very well may have copies of the Poverty Reduction Action Plan, but I do have copies here if any of the committee members would like to have one.

Thank you.

**Chair:** Thank you, Minister Hudson.

Gord McNeilly.

**Mr. McNeilly:** I'd just like to echo that sentiment. I think that's a really good place for our committee to start. I think there was a lot of great work done and we have to almost – this committee could almost take an audit of what's been done, what needs to be done and next steps for that document. That document, *Belonging and Thriving: A Poverty Reduction Action Plan for Prince Edward Island*, has a shelf life between 2019 and 2024, so it is a five-year action plan. Let's stay on top of that and bring in some witnesses around that document from your department, as well as that were on the steering committee or the council members.

Thank you.

**Chair:** Hannah Bell.

**Ms. Bell:** If I could just clarify, though, that the scope of this committee is very narrow. This is not a committee to discuss poverty writ large in the province that we are going to need to do that, but we have to be very careful that we remain within the scope, which is those three points.

So while the Poverty Action Plan is – as Minister Hudson is critical – it's great that we've got that research and we don't want to redo that research. A living wage was not mentioned in the Poverty Action Plan and neither was a basic income guarantee.

The scope of this committee is to work on these key pieces and report back on those within 12 months. So we have to be very careful that we can't creep outside that one; otherwise, we're no longer in the mandate of the committee.

While we have the social development committee which can do a broader look at, for instance, strengthening or actions that are ongoing in the Poverty Action Plan, it's the data that was collected from the Poverty Action Plan which will be really important to inform this one. That's my understanding and interpretation of the very different set of rules for a special committee, versus one that has a much broader mandate.

**Chair:** Minister Hudson.

**Mr. Hudson:** Yes, thank you, Chair.

I do appreciate the comments from the hon. Member, which I do agree as you had pointed out originally, Chair, that there are basically three goals or three items that the committee will and must focus on. My point being though, with regard to Belonging and Thriving: A Poverty Reduction Action Plan, but I think that there would have been, and has been, information that would have been obtained through that consultation process that very well could be relevant here.

That is certainly the point that I was bringing forward, that any information, again, our department would be more than happy to share that and to have a review of it, see what is relevant to the mandate of this committee, and very well that there will be information that was gathered in that consultation process that is not relevant, but we want to make sure that that information –

from my perspective anyway – that that information that is relevant is taken under consideration.

Thank you.

**Chair:** Sonny.

**Mr. Gallant:** I want to thank both members for their comments and two very important points. As Hannah said, our committee functioned – as we may or may not remember – I know I had to get it because I didn't remember the second part of it: we need to report back recommendations to establish clear definitions and measures of poverty and a living wage for PEI.

The second one is: report back with fully costed recommendations regarding the creation of a basic income guarantee pilot project for PEI, correct? So –

**Chair:** Those were the – oh, sorry, yeah.

**Mr. Gallant:** But that being said, I see no issue with looking at Mr. Hudson's report as there may be some things in there we could bring to the committee; I'm not saying all of them, but you know.

**Chair:** Hannah Bell.

**Ms. Bell:** Thank you.

Perhaps, Chair, we could begin in terms of work planning, we've got these few weeks before the House spins up and doing that piece about (Indistinct) learning what we need to learn.

We know from the discussions that were had in the House during the last sitting that there's a lot for all of us to learn about, just even what some of these things are that we're talking about in here, about the data that we have currently available to us and about what our community has to tell us.

I see Marie Burge is here today with the Working Group for a Livable Income and the Cooper Institute, and I think that's one of the groups that you had mentioned in one of your emails that is critical that we speak to, to get the context of an organization that's working in the community and has been doing a lot of community-based research.

Perhaps that's something that we can begin with as a committee is sort of identifying – as well as Hugh Segal, who's already on the list – who else can we call to help us really level up our knowledge and education on what data is available, where the gaps are and what we should be looking at in the scope of this committee.

Perhaps I could make a motion that we could consider, having time to review the documentation, calling representatives from the province who are the experts on the poverty action plan – I don't know who that is, but I'm sure somebody can tell us – and also calling the Working Group for a Livable Income.

I don't – and then, any other –

**Chair:** As one motion, you want those together?

**Ms. Bell:** Two different motions.

**Chair:** Okay, yeah.

**Ms. Bell:** Or one, however you want to do that. I don't know, Chair.

**Chair:** Okay. Thank you very much for that suggestion and acknowledging Marie Burge who is here and I will also just – full disclosure that until being elected I was a member of the Working Group for a Livable Income, so I've been a part of that and it was – and I'm glad to hear you bring that forward as a community group that's been doing some wonderful work around looking at the experiences of people who have lived experience of poverty as well as what we can do here on Prince Edward Island. I think that would make a lot of sense.

Would that be the right way to approach it then? To look at different groups that we might or individuals we might invite to come and engage with the group, is that –

**Clerk Assistant:** Sure, if that's the approach the committee would like to take.

**Chair:** Okay, great.

Going back to the Poverty Reduction Action Plan, I believe that there was some excellent background research as well. I'm not sure if that's in the final report or if those

documents were released earlier in the process but where you're from the department, they actually defined, gave a list of different definitions of poverty and that would be very useful for all of us.

I'm not sure if we can assign homework to our group for all of us to read. I don't know if that's how this works, but how do we all feel about that?

**Some Hon. Members:** [Laughter]

**Some Hon. Members:** (Indistinct)

**Ms. Bell:** (Indistinct) reading list.

**Mr. Gallant:** You want a motion for homework?

**Chair:** Yeah.

**Some Hon. Members:** [Laughter]

**Chair:** I kind of do.

**Some Hon. Members:** (Indistinct)

**Chair:** I think that it makes a lot of sense to invite individuals from the department who were involved in the creation of that action plan as well as that background research to come and share some of that with us, with the understanding that we will be prepared in having read that in advance.

So, should we do – Hannah, did you want to –

**Ms. Bell:** I so move that we add two other calls to our work plan: one is for the experts within the department who have worked with the data for poverty action plan and the other one is the Working Group for a Livable Income.

I guess the context for that would be kind of helping us get a baseline of understanding, of definitions, of the context of PEI, I think, before we begin to be able to talk about some of the more mathy – the more economic side of this, I think we need to be talking about poverty is my short answer. That wasn't very short, was it?

**Chair:** No. That was a long motion.

**Ms. Bell:** That was a long motion.

**Chair:** Did you get all of that?

**Clerk Assistant:** Yes.

**Some Hon. Members:** (Indistinct)

**Chair:** No, that's wonderful. Okay, so anybody want to second that motion to – no, we don't want to second, we don't need to second it.

All in favour of inviting the Working Group for a Livable Income as well as individuals from the department who were involved in the Poverty Reduction Action Plan to come and speak with our group.

**Some Hon. Members:** Aye!

**Chair:** Okay. Wonderful, that's a great start.

I see that as falling under the providing definitions of poverty, as well as starting our work perhaps on guaranteed annual income. So that's good.

Yes, Minister Hudson.

**Mr. Hudson:** Thank you, Chair.

I think that one of the things as we get our feet under us here today, certainly it is important to identify witnesses that we could call in. I do appreciate Hannah's motion. I think that there are additional ones, though, that I would like to put forward, at least for discussion as far as calling as witnesses.

Two ones that I have here: Dr. Evelyn Forget, Canadian economist. She has expertise on guaranteed annual income.

Also, representation or a representative from Maytree, which is a Canadian organization with a mandate to, and I'll read this as it is in front of me: "systemic solutions to poverty and strengthening civic communities."

So I would be prepared to move that both Dr. Forget and a representative from Maytree be put on our witness list.

**Chair:** So I think perhaps in this case I'm going to suggest that we make those two separate motions. Just first of all, Dr. Forget is not here on Prince Edward Island so we would have to be able to Skype her in. I

don't know if that needs to be part of the motion because at this point we couldn't – we have no budget to bring her here.

Though I would – I don't know if I'm allowed to say my opinion as a Chair, but I do think she would be a wonderful person to have come forward and I would support that.

How do we need to frame that, Emily?

**Clerk Assistant:** Sure, it definitely can be included in the motion that if she's unavailable to attend in person that the committee would be willing to hear from her via Skype and that could be included in the motion just for extra clarity for the committee and for the committee clerk.

**Chair:** Okay, great. Do I need to – or does Minister Hudson need to state a motion clearly for you?

**Clerk Assistant:** Yeah, perhaps. Yeah, that would be great.

**Chair:** Would you like that?

**Clerk Assistant:** That would be great.

**Mr. Hudson:** I would move that Dr. Forget, Canadian economist with expertise on guaranteed annual income, be invited as a witness, as well as a representative from Maytree. In the event that these individual witnesses cannot appear in person that every attempt would be made to have them as witnesses by video conferencing.

**Chair:** So I had a question about Maytree: I'm not as familiar with that group, so do you have any other information about sort of where – who funds that groups or where they're based? No?

**Mr. Hudson:** I don't, Chair. I'm sorry, not right in front of me at the moment.

If you like, I can certainly get that information and have it circulated to the committee members.

**Chair:** Does everyone prefer that? So maybe, would you be comfortable doing that in two separate motions and then we can all have a chance to look? Unless anybody else is familiar with Maytree? I don't know – or are we all just comfortable voting on it as is?

**Mr. Hudson:** If you like – I'm sorry, Chair.

**Chair:** Yes, sorry, Minister Hudson.

**Mr. Hudson:** If you like, I can make an amendment or addendum to that motion that prior to a representative from Maytree being called as a witness, that information on the background, the relevancy of having a representative called as a witness, that I will see that that information is circulated to committee members in advance.

**Chair:** Perhaps then – yes, so Emily's just suggesting that perhaps for clarity you could withdraw that first motion and then just put one forward just for Dr. Forget and then we can move to the other piece because there's a lot of layers to that one.

Is that okay?

**Mr. Hudson:** Yes. Thank you, Chair.

You know, I think that we need to be clear that any individual on this committee can put forward a motion and then that motion can be voted on; it can be approved or it can be declined.

I am more than happy to make two separate motions, but I think that we do need to be clear that we don't keep going back and forth with regard to changing a motion that we can vote on it or what have you.

**Chair:** Well, okay, so I think that's fair to say. If you would like us to move forward with the motion as originally stated we can certainly do that.

**Mr. Hudson:** No. Like I said originally, Chair, I'm more than happy to make two separate motions; but I think that we do need that clarity as we go forward just for expediency's sake, if you like.

So again, first of all I will move that Dr. Evelyn Forget, Canadian economist with expertise on guaranteed annual income, be called as a witness. In the event that the doctor cannot appear in person, that every effort be made to have her appear by way of video conferencing.

**Chair:** All right.

All in favour?

**Some Hon. Members:** Aye!

**Chair:** Opposed?

All right, great, so that motion passes.

Now, would you like to make a second motion or is there anyone who would like to speak on how they feel about voting on inviting the Maytree group to come and speak to us?

Hannah Bell?

**Ms. Bell:** (Indistinct) information. Again, I'm not familiar, so – I was sort of joking/not joking earlier about our reading list, but I feel that we all have different sets of information and it might be a great start because this is a work planning meeting that we have a general idea about sort of where we want to go.

But exactly where that fits into our work plan and when is subject to some of us getting a little caught up and perhaps we could circulate kind of a reference set of information and then firm up the plan following the chance to review that information, including information about Maytree and about living wage and so on. If that would be acceptable that we have it kind of on a general basis and firm that up with some further research.

**Chair:** Sonny Gallant?

**Mr. Gallant:** Thank you, Chair.

I fully agree. We can add it to our homework list and (Indistinct) –

**Ms. Bell:** Yes.

**Some Hon. Members:** [Laughter]

**Mr. Gallant:** – since I am not aware of this group either, Minister, and it'd be good to have some information. Thank you.

**Chair:** All right.

Minister Hudson, would you still like to put forward the motion or would you want to just leave it as is to send out the information and we can discuss it at a later date as a possible addition to the list?

**Mr. Hudson:** Thank you, Chair.

What I will commit, based on the discussion that we have had here, is that I will have information – would the best means be through the clerk and have that disseminated to or sent out to the committee members for review and then a decision at our next meeting can be made as to whether an individual representative from Maytree is called as a witness?

**Clerk Assistant:** Certainly, yeah. I would be happy to circulate any information to the committee that anyone would like to share so if you can get me that information I'll definitely circulate it to all the members of this committee.

**Chair:** Hannah Bell.

**Ms. Bell:** So to add to that then, since we decided we're apparently going to do homework, I got the link for the Canadian Living Wage Framework, which is actually one of the resources that we could look at in developing the living wage.

There is some reading in there, but what it will do is give us something that we can refer to when we talk about that later on and help us figure out what resources we (Indistinct). So it's a reading only at this point, but I can share that one in for the committee.

I would also, for future reference, like to make a motion. It will require some expenditure so it will probably be after, but just to have it on the record: to call Harvey Stevens, who is actually one of the original researchers when he was a much younger man on (Indistinct) project in Manitoba, and is now an expert in Stats Canada social policy simulation, which is a really exciting tool that's made available through Stats Canada.

It takes a lot of training to get to use it, which is why I'm recommending him, because what it allows us to do is actually literally plug numbers in around incomes and taxes and demographics and so on and see what the impact is of potential investments into something like a basic income guarantee or tax credits or whatever that may be.

All that being said, the motion is to have his name on our future witness list; and we would need to talk to him about the costs involved in bringing him here, so that it could be considered by the committee, because that is a case where we would actually need somebody here with us because it would be a working group and it would require access to tax information and so on which would have to be coordinated through government, and so would need definitely some more planning.

**Chair:** Just to clarify then with the motion you're putting forward: As an initial step, would you suggest that we could Skype this person in for a first preliminary meeting before –

**Ms. Bell:** (Indistinct) talk about in our work plan, yeah. He's definitely, as a data expert, probably a little bit too – a bit more on the science than we would be ready for straight away; but as we develop our work plan and our capacity, we may want to bring him in to talk to us a bit about how the math works behind how you actually cost a basic income, because that's what he can do.

**Chair:** Would anyone else like to speak to this motion?

All right, so all in favour of Hannah Bell's motion – I can't remember the name that you just –

**An Hon. Member:** Harvey Stevens.

**Chair:** Harvey Stevens, perfect.

**Ms. Bell:** I can also provide a link to the Social Policy Simulation Database from Stats Canada just so we can have an idea of what it is; what that tool does. So, certainly a future reference point.

**Chair:** All right, so all in favour – oh, sorry, Minister Hudson.

**Mr. Hudson:** Thank you, Chair.

Just for clarity, that the initial presentation would be by Skype, and then subsequent to that, if the committee felt that it was necessary, that it would be beneficial, then we would look at having a representative come appear in person and associated costs. Then, as a committee we would have to go

back to the Legislature, as I understand. Just for clarity on that.

**Ms. Bell:** Absolutely. Thank you, minister.

**Mr. Hudson:** Okay, yes.

**Ms. Bell:** Good question. Yeah, that is the case.

That's something that the committee will have to decide about whether we target an expenditure for expertise that we otherwise don't have.

I have been thinking a lot about how we do the costed aspect of this, and looking for where are the resources on how we can accurately and objectively provide costs. This is actually the tool that is used on a national basis, and I think it could a real asset for us to have access to that, but there are consequences in that expertise.

**Chair:** So just for clarity then, I suppose this motion is to invite Harvey Stevens to present to the committee via Skype if he's unable to attend otherwise, because we won't be paying for him to come yet at this stage, but we can talk about that later.

So, all in favour of that motion?

**Some Hon. Members:** Aye!

**Chair:** Opposed?

Okay, great. The motion passes.

Natalie Jameson.

**Ms. Jameson:** Sure, I'd like to see Roxanne Carter-Thompson present to the group if at all possible. She's the Executive Director with the Adventure Group, and I believe she was the chair of the most recent poverty plan so I think she'd be a really great resource for us and a dynamite lady for sure.

**Chair:** Can I ask a question for clarification? Just wondering, in terms of those three action areas, where would you see that fit just so that I can understand (Indistinct)

**Ms. Jameson:** Sure. I think she would help us to establish some clear definitions and

measures of poverty based on her experience, if that's fair.

**Chair:** Anybody else want to speak to that motion?

All in favour of inviting Roxanne Carter-Thompson to speak to the committee?

**Some Hon. Members:** Aye!

**Chair:** Opposed?

All right, motion carried.

Any other additions? Yes, Minister Hudson.

**Mr. Hudson:** Thank you, Chair.

Just for consideration and not to put any names forward at this point in time, but I think it would be beneficial for the committee if – and not to identify, as I say, witnesses here today – but I think it'd be very helpful for the committee if we did have one, two, three appear before the committee that actually have lived experience with poverty.

I'll put that out there just for discussion, and again not to identify, but for discussion. To me, I think that it would be very worthwhile to hear it right from the ones that have lived it in the past.

**Chair:** Hannah Bell.

**Ms. Bell:** I think it's really important that we talk about poverty, not just as numbers or stats, but as people.

I am cautious to call witnesses to speak about their lived experience given that this is a public forum that is streamed on Facebook and it's meant to be public, but that often those stories are very personal and can be quite challenging to be shared in a public space.

Certainly when we do consultation on some of these issues, safe space and communications guidelines are a really important part about how we do that to protect people's dignity. I am always nervous about asking people to come in and share in a space where their dignity cannot be respected and we don't have control over

what people will say online or how they may interact.

It's not that I – I think it's critical that we hear those stories, but I'm just nervous of this space being the space where we do that. Because it can very rapidly turn into somebody being in a goldfish bowl and that's a really uncomfortable place to put somebody, so just my –

**Chair:** Thank you for bringing that concern forward.

I just wanted to let the committee know, and then I will move here that it is possible for the committee to move to hear evidence in private. So we could do that off – in camera, yes. It's possible.

**Ms. Bell:** Frankly, that would be the only way I would be comfortable with that, and I think that would also probably be the only way we'd get somebody to come, to be honest.

**Chair:** Sonny Gallant.

**Mr. Gallant:** Thank you, Chair.

You just answered my – I was going to ask that if that was possible, because I think they're both very good points, so – great. Good.

Thank you.

**Chair:** Minister Hudson.

**Mr. Hudson:** Yes, and is an excellent point that Hannah has brought forward.

I think even for the sake of records, as the clerk has mentioned and as you had brought forward, Chair, that we can call witnesses; that it can be in camera.

I think, too, dependent upon how witnesses may feel – and I'll ask, put this out to the clerk – that comments, questions, if they were not comfortable in actually having them record it, if we could go down that road.

Not only having it in camera, but not having any information or dictation of the comments, the questions asked; so is that a possibility as well, clerk?

**Clerk Assistant:** Yes. It is a possibility.

We don't transcribe when we're in camera, so that wouldn't be a concern.

And I think at – the committee does agree to invite those that have the lived experience.

It would be used for the report to kind of support what the committee would like to recommend, and certainly we wouldn't use any information publicly if it wasn't granted by the people who are making the presentations to the committee.

**Chair:** So practical – Oh, sorry, Gordon McNeilly. You go ahead.

**Mr. McNeilly:** Can I move onto –

**Chair:** Well let's stick with this one for now and we –

**Mr. McNeilly:** Perfect.

**Chair:** Is that okay?

**Mr. McNeilly:** Yeah.

**Chair:** Did you want to speak on this?

**Mr. McNeilly:** I was going to say, I think yeah, we don't – the people are here and they would come in to talk to the committee and it should be a safe place.

So I think with consultation with the person coming in, and anyway, I think the real thing is to define and clearly define the problem. We have to talk to the people that have lived it and potentially gotten out of it and want to tell their stories.

**Chair:** Thank you.

So, practical question: how would we be inviting people who have lived experience of poverty? So how would we be – who would we reach out to, how would we make that decision as to who would come and speak to the committee?

I don't know the answer to that, but I'm open to thoughts on that.

Oh, sorry, Natalie Jameson.

**Ms. Jameson:** I'm thinking about, again, Roxanne Carter-Thompson, to be honest. With her work with the Adventure Group, I'm sure she'd have a lot of people to draw on in terms of their experience and she might be a good first point of contact to sort of reach out to and to have those discussions.

**Chair:** Hannah Bell.

**Ms. Bell:** We had previously spoken about calling the PEI Working Group for a Livable Income in terms of – and that group is actually made up of a number of community organizations, so I know the PEI Council of People with Disabilities, for instance, is represented on there, and the lived experience of people with disabilities is another whole factor in this story.

So if we have the opportunity to bring in a group that can speak for a broad range, that's really powerful, and also one that has done data analysis.

I agree that Roxanne is a fantastic advocate for marginalized populations and the work that she does is critical, but I don't know how much of her narrative can assist us with the data aspect that we need from this in terms of establishing benchmarks.

I'd like to see her on the witness list in terms of the impacts and aspects of poverty, which I think is a really important part for us to learn; but again, we need to be careful that we are, in the time that we have, focusing on the most bang for our time in terms of who do we reach.

We can spend a lot of time talking and not moving forward, and we're going to have to balance our talking with our moving forward. So the work planning piece on this, I think, is going to be critical in terms of what are we trying to achieve when we call a witness forward?

**Chair:** Gordon McNeilly.

**Mr. McNeilly:** I think that's where we come along, is that poverty hits us all and we all have a different view of how to get each other out of poverty.

So that's where I struggle a little bit with the committee's function at the end, is if the

basic income guarantee pilot for PEI does not work in this committee, we could spend a long time not making good inroads into combating poverty in Prince Edward Island.

And, you know, I want it to work. I know it's something that could work to an extent in Prince Edward Island, I do believe; but that's where I am with that. I want this committee to be functional so we can get people out of poverty, and I think that's where we are with our witnesses we're trying to call in, because the definition of poverty and the direction to get us out of poverty is different.

So I'll just add that for the record.

**Chair:** All right, thank you.

With that being said, we do still need to stick to the mandate laid out in the motion, right? We always have to come back to that, I think. Whether we all agree that that is the right way for it or not, that has to be always in consideration.

Natalie Jameson, did you have something?

**Ms. Jameson:** No, I just wanted to touch on Hannah's point.

I was suggesting Roxanne, based on what we're talking about; but she would have those contacts, she would be dealing on a daily basis with those individuals, those marginalized individuals.

I know recently I went to the Prosper grad and there was a group of individuals who were working towards finding gainful employment. I think those are the types of people that she has connections with, and therefore I think she'd be a great point of contact to help us reach some of that population.

**Chair:** Hannah Bell, did you have –

**Ms. Bell:** No, it was just about I think I understand to Gordon's point, I understand the frustration of thinking that this isn't enough.

In some ways or this is – you were in the space where we had some very challenging conversations about around when we talked about minimum wage and just adding

measures of poverty. That's part of the reason this committee exists is because we had such a deep conversation then and realized that the Legislature was not in agreement about even what poverty was.

But saying that, while we're working on this very focused plan in this committee on these three points, the poverty action plan is still in place and it's still going forward. The minister's department is still working on those outcomes. So we're not preventing other actions from happening.

Social services is still supporting five and a half thousand Islanders every day. Whether or not we agree with how that is happening, it still is.

This is about doing work now – and I'm with you, every day is frustrating; but on a big scale, having something that says in 12 months, we can come back with recommendations that have a tangible impact and will actually potentially change how we talk about poverty here in PEI and what tools we have to do about it.

We've been talking about that part of the narrative for years. Like I said, the people in the Working Group for a Livable Income can tell you how many years they've been working on it. This is the first time that this conversation has happened here.

So as frustrating it is that this isn't enough, it is huge; and we've got a real privilege to get to make this happen. So it doesn't mean we're still not going to do all the other stuff, too.

**Chair:** Gordon McNeilly.

**Mr. McNeilly:** I'll just add to that.

I agree with you. I think we're trying to get everybody out of poverty. It's how do we get there, obviously. How do we define it, too?

And for the committees, as Chair of the health and social development committee, that there's a great deal of things on that committee to look at and a lot of them have to do with poverty.

So in order for the committees to kind of work together, that's all I was saying is that

there's so much to do in a short time and I think we all are in the right place for things. The definition in here, the clear definition, and the measurement of poverty is a good place to start, and all of Prince Edward Island needs to see this committee doing a good job with that.

**Chair:** So just bringing it back, then, to the motion to invite individuals with lived experience of poverty.

Another concern I want to express to the group would be that asking individuals who are economically vulnerable to come to our committee meetings without having any way to, so let's say, cover cost of transportation or providing any sort of stipend, I think is something we should consider.

Or cost of child care, most of the people who we are inviting to the committee, it might be part of their work role to be here; and, you know, if we're recognizing that these are people who have lived experience of poverty, that that's a limitation that we currently have for the committee.

Minister Hudson.

**Mr. Hudson:** Yes, thank you, Chair, and that is an excellent point that you have raised, in my opinion.

Certainly being the MLA from western PEI, I can appreciate the challenges that a number of ones have with regards to transportation; and, you know, I'm going off on a little bit of a tangent here, but certainly transportation in and of itself can contribute to individuals' – their vulnerabilities, the situation economically that they may find themselves in.

So back to your point, and from what I've heard from the committee members is feeling, yes, that it would be very beneficial for the committee to hear ones who have lived experience. Is there a possibility that we can go outside the walls of this Chamber to meet with people? I think we need to be proactive on how we approach this, so I'll just throw that out there as a possibility for consideration.

**Chair:** Okay, Sonny Gallant.

**Mr. Gallant:** (Indistinct) to piggyback on that, maybe we could make an announcement that we're going to go to Kings County, have one in Charlottetown, go to Prince County. Committees have done that in the past, have gone out, and it may make it more feasible or more enticing for people to come.

**Chair:** Anyone else want to speak to that?

I think that's a really great idea. I think it would certainly help with these issues. I would still feel more comfortable if we were able to help people still with transportation, because I think that there are – even doing that, there will still be barriers as well as perhaps with a small stipend for those who, you know, we know that they are economically struggling. We'd be asking of their time, and I think –

Yes, Hannah Bell.

**Ms. Bell:** In a previous life, as the director of a nonprofit organization that worked with marginalized populations, whenever we did any projects that required us to do public consultation, we provided exactly that and it was actually part of our budget to do a project would be providing accessibility supports, and so I'd work primarily with women.

So there was always a child care provision, and that was either cash to cover child care costs or child care providers on site, travel expenditures, and usually food, especially if we were dealing with First Nations communities, or if we were going out into a community. Then on top of that, depending on what we were asking of people, if we were asking them to do a workshop or something, then there would be a stipend and it was actually part of a standard budget for a project that included any form of consultation.

Now, that doesn't mean we can't do some of those things first, because we can also seek input and consultation without costs by providing some additional tools; but not everybody, particularly those who are marginalized populations, have access to a computer to do an online survey or on social media or anything, but it doesn't mean that we can't. So as perhaps, I think part of our work plan is communications and outreach,

is let's think creatively about how we can engage.

To Natalie's point, there are people we can talk to who can tell us, even if it's not direct, they are still going to have those stories, and there are people we can get to directly – perhaps a little bit more logistical support down the road; but speaking to and with, is going to be really critical for us to have a better understanding of why we're trying to do this.

**Chair:** Thank you, Hannah.

I think we're all in agreement that hearing from individuals who have lived experience of poverty is a priority of this committee, but there are some complexities that we're going to have to figure out and that may be beyond the scope of today's meeting. So perhaps we can add to that our work plan and whether we decide this needs to happen once we have proposed a budget that can cover some of these things in the Legislature.

Maybe that might be the best way forward. We can discuss that later. We'll add that to the work plan.

Yes, Minister Hudson.

**Mr. Hudson:** Yes, thank you, Chair.

I think that's an excellent point, that we could dwell on this for the next half or three-quarters of an hour as far as how we're going to proceed; which at the end of the day might be counterproductive.

But just going back to the poverty reduction action plan, I think that when the information is provided to the clerk from my department, there certainly were submissions from individuals who had lived the experience, if you like, and as we move forward, just to have that information and to review it in a preliminary basis anyway could be helpful.

Thank you.

**Chair:** Thank you.

Gord McNeilly.

**Mr. McNeilly:** Yeah, good point.

I'd just like to maybe add the scope – when we talk about the clear definition and measuring poverty, over the last few years, there has been things that have popped up that are unforeseen that lead to poverty and I just want to add, can we look for people who have been renovicted and forced into poverty? That seems to be a new issue and it could help us define poverty now.

So anybody that's, you know – if we're getting witnesses, what it has done to be renovicted from your house and how that has affected your family; I'd like to see how we can invite or look for some people there. There could be some – (Indistinct) I look at poverty as that's part of the changing world of poverty.

Thank you.

**Chair:** Thank you.

So perhaps we can take that note to be included in our discussion of engaging with individuals with lived experience of poverty and how we might move that forward. Does that – okay?

Does anybody else have anything else they would like to bring forward as part of the work plan; the initial work plan of the committee?

Minister Hudson?

**Mr. Hudson:** Thank you, Chair.

Just for clarity, are we going to be putting on our witness list the individual that my colleague has put forward perhaps (Indistinct) –

**Chair:** That did pass, yes.

**Mr. Hudson:** Okay, (Indistinct)

**Chair:** Emily will provide an overview to everybody (Indistinct)

Yes, Gordon, sorry.

**Mr. McNeilly:** I have just a few witnesses that I'd like the committee to consider calling: Mike MacDonald of the upper food room, to talk about his experience and work; there is a link between poverty and mental illness, so I'd like to request Reid Burke

come in, who is the executive director of the Canadian Mental Health Association; Andrea MacDonald, who is the CEO of the United Way of Prince Edward Island, works across different charities and has done a lot of work with poverty and is on the Poverty Reduction Action Plan committee; as well as getting somebody from Blooming House to come in and maybe talk about how Blooming House has helped in the community and if it's fulfilling the need and if the scope of practice under that is enough; and as well as the Reach program in Stratford, Teresa Hennebery is over there, and she has done a great job with her team in that program to help kids struggling with addictions and mental illness and poverty find a new way.

**Chair:** Hannah Bell?

**Ms. Bell:** A couple of quick things.

Thank you, Gordon, for those recommendations. I think if we are calling any witnesses – again, in context – if we can make sure that the witnesses are provided with the motion that provides clarity on the scope of what we're asking them to come in to, so that we're not doing presentations on policy that is fully outside.

You know, as much as these are all critical, we need to make sure that they understand what it is that they're coming for in terms of those three key things that we're trying to achieve in the mandate; that limited mandate of the special committee.

Chair, I'd also, with your indulgence, like to recognize some additional guests. I'd like to welcome Tina Mundy, Marcia Carroll – hello – and, as we were just discussing you Roxanne, you must have known, Roxanne Carter-Thompson; and I also forgot to earlier mention Jason Alward with the housing affordability group. So thank you very much for joining us. We actually talked about all three of you today before you got here.

**Some Hon. Members:** [Laughter]

**Unidentified Voice:** Our ears were burning.

**Ms. Bell:** That was it.

So, former minister of family and social development, the director of the Council of People with Disabilities, and the director of the Adventure Group and chair of the poverty reduction action council: very relevant guests to have in the Chamber today.

**Chair:** Thank you.

**Mr. McNeilly:** (Indistinct)

**Ms. Bell:** And Brittany, sorry –

**Chair:** All right.

**Mr. McNeilly:** She's also with the (Indistinct) –

**Ms. Bell:** That's right, and that was me doing that kind of brain melt of like –

**Mr. McNeilly:** (Indistinct)

**Chair:** All right, well, yes: Welcome, everybody.

**Ms. Bell:** Yes.

**Chair:** All right, yes. Welcome everybody.

All right, so we had a list there.

Just to Hannah's comment now, maybe you can clarify, Gord, where you feel that those – there were five different sort of names or groups where they would each contribute to those, the three action items, basically, that we have in this motion? And that would help, I think.

**Mr. McNeilly:** Sure. So there's five different witnesses, and I think that each one of them has dealt a great deal with poverty in different ways. And they would definitely all provide clarity under the definition of poverty. They would have a different approach from each one.

I think we're going to get – there are different cycles of the poverty spectrum. They all would have measurements of poverty as well, so livable wages would be up to us to figure out. I think it's probably some of the solutions around each one of them would have a different aspect of that.

And then just finally, to another section that we can't be remised about looking at is university or post-secondary poverty. I'm not sure – I don't have a witness, but we have two major institutions. We house – well, just in Charlottetown – in the Charlottetown area, but across the province, do the people going to school, do they need a livable wage and how do we get there as a province?

So there's some definitions there that I need to know to move forward as a committee member on this committee.

**Chair:** Okay. So just to sort of wrap that – sum that up, I guess: we had Mike MacDonald from the Upper Room; Reid Burke; Andrea MacDonald from the United Way; someone from Blooming House; someone from the Reach program; and someone to speak about post-secondary and the experience of poverty.

All of that with the understanding that it would be to help us define what – find a definition or look at definitions of poverty and measures of poverty. Does that kind of wrap it – sum it up there?

**Mr. McNeilly:** Sorry –

**Chair:** Gord McNeilly, sorry.

**Mr. McNeilly:** Blooming House, as well. I don't know if we – or Reach (Indistinct)

**Chair:** Anybody else want to speak?

Minister Hudson?

**Mr. Hudson:** Yes, thank you, Chair.

And I think too, that we have to be very careful, recognize of timeframe that we are working with. All great suggestions, Gord, do appreciate it. But it is made abundantly clear to the witnesses in advance of them appearing that what the mandate of the committee is and what the three parameters, or the three basic things that we're looking at here.

And I would just suggest when you mention Blooming House, Gord, excellent; would just put it out there a representative from Bedford MacDonald, as well.

**Chair:** So I wonder if the most appropriate way then is just as one motion to invite the list of people that we just went through and –

Does anybody want to move that motion?

**Ms. Bell:** (Indistinct)

**Chair:** All right, Hannah Bell.

All in favour?

**Some Hon. Members:** Aye!

Opposed?

Okay, excellent. So that motion passes. Anything else that we would like to add to the work plan bearing in mind that, of course, we don't have any – there's quite a bit there already there's no doubt. But any funding we can't – nothing that would be a cost or –

Yes, Hannah Bell?

**Ms. Bell:** Thanks, Chair.

Coming back to what we had said at the beginning, and thinking about that – what seems a very short timeframe, and a ton of homework, if we could sort of, between now and our fall sitting, I think I heard a couple of key things and one of them is a better understanding of the contexts, so that we can focus our research and what we're asking for, sort of (Indistinct) of the next stage.

Then, also, to be able to make a clear ask of the funds that we need to support that work, which would be in the fall sitting.

So there's a lot of homework to do in person and at home between now and that fall sitting if that's the case; so some of the work planning may need to be focused because of that.

Based on not just availability, but which of the things that, again, you know, give us the most value in terms of our learning capacity in that time, because we can still be hearing from witnesses to continue to reinforce that narrative as we go through.

But the core is; what do we need in these next few weeks so that we can make a focused ask for resources in the sitting.

What does that – perhaps the clerk can advise – what does a resolution for funding to the Legislative Assembly look like? How do we do that? Is it a recommendation in the report?

**Clerk Assistant:** I'll probably have to get more information on that report back to the committee, but I'll certainly make note of it for to be ready to answer that at the next meeting.

**Chair:** Minister Hudson.

**Mr. Hudson:** Thank you, Chair.

And thank the honorable member for bringing that forward as well, because it is important that we have the opportunity before the Legislature does reconvene this fall to have that budget that ask, if you like, to take forward.

I think as a committee that we certainly need advance opportunity to review that to see – to make sure that we have our bases covered. That when we do go to the Legislature that we have the amount that we do need that we don't end up having to wait for whatever reason to go back in the spring and ask for, okay, we overlooked this. We are going to require additional funds.

Thank you.

**Chair:** Now would it be – just a quick question – would it be most appropriate then for this prioritization to happen outside of the meeting, or is that something we should be discussing which pieces we feel we would need to move on most quickly?

I don't know what the process is to go toward the goal of having a resolution to bring forward around funding. Do we need to do that here or can we do that off?

**Clerk Assistant:** So as I mentioned, I'll definitely be coming back with some information of how we can do that and, maybe at that point, the committee can determine what its priorities are for that request.

**Chair:** So we're just acknowledging at this point that there is a prioritization that needs to happen because of the timelines, and that we will need to have that ready for the Legislature, the funding request.

Gordon McNeilly?

**Mr. McNeilly:** You know, if we have this timeframe, I'm not – I'll work 24 hours a day on this. I don't care if we have two or three meetings a week, have a meeting on Saturday. It doesn't matter to me.

If we need to work at this, we need to get – these three things have to be done well with this committee. So I'm not afraid to put the time in and I want to hear and get a good sense of what's going to happen.

So it's up to the Chair, and to figure out if we need to meet more than once a week or twice a week or for longer periods of time. Let's do it.

**Chair:** So we do have a discussion of scheduling on the agenda, but I just want to make sure that everybody's had a chance to say – to add everything they would like to add to the work plan first. But I appreciate that, thank you.

Yes. Hannah Bell?

**Ms. Bell:** One last thing. Something that we can do quickly and that we should perhaps consider to nail down is, begin an engagement – community engagement – just let people know what we're doing, that we're doing this, and make a decision in committee on what information we want to seek.

We know that people have been asked – there's been a lot of discussion around some of these topics already. So we have to be aware that we're not wearing people out with the same questions, but at the same time, we do have an opportunity to get people engaged in the fact that this conversation is happening.

So whether that's through our social media channels at the Leg or whether it's a special page for this or whatever, but I would really encourage the committee to think about how we communicate the work that's happening in here.

Because the more the public are engaged with it, the more likely it's going to be representative of the province and what we need to see happen here.

**Chair:** All right, thank you.

So we can – we don't need a motion to add that to the work plan, I don't think. Do we?

Does everyone agree that we need to seriously consider how we're going to engage with community on this and look at options in terms of the website and all the different ways we might do that. We'll have to have that discussion.

Okay. Everybody agrees.

Anything else that we need to add to the work plan?

**Ms. Jameson:** I (Indistinct) see a representative from Chances family services present to the committee.

I just feel that they deal with families from a wide spectrum from various backgrounds. To be honest, I think that they could bring a lot in terms of their knowledge and experience with what families need to thrive and become more resilient and that kind of thing.

So personally, I don't know if anybody's familiar with that organization, but it's certainly a good one.

**Chair:** So we can add that to the list then of people to invite – understanding the context of working toward a definition of poverty and measures of poverty. Thank you.

Anything else to add to the work plan before we move to the discussion of scheduling?

Natalie, did you want to offer that as a motion?

**Ms. Jameson:** (Indistinct) I move to have a representative from Chance's family services present to the committee.

**Chair:** All right. All in favour?

**Some Hon. Members:** Aye!

**Chair:** Opposed?

All right, it's carried.

So if everyone is comfortable moving on to the discussion of scheduling, of course, with the understanding that this is not the last time we'll talk about the work plan, but it sounds like we have enough to fill up a lot of time before the next sitting, which is great. We have a lot to do.

So Gordon would like to meet every weekend and as much (Indistinct). No, but I appreciate that enthusiasm because I think there's a lot we need to do.

Minister Hudson.

**Mr. Hudson:** Yes, Chair, every weekend in West Prince, and I'm sure Sonny will second that.

**Chair:** So perhaps we'll start with Thursday afternoon. How do we feel about that as a time with our schedules that's where we are today? Is that –

**Clerk Assistant:** Can I interject on that?

**Chair:** Yes, of course.

**Clerk Assistant:** So in meeting with my colleague, other committee clerk for the Legislative Assembly, the Special Committee on Climate Change, I believe is also working with Thursday afternoon.

So my proposal would be that we work with as many Thursday afternoons as we can between now and the sitting and also work with some Friday mornings when that time slot is also available for the rules committee. But kind of on the weeks that they're not meeting that this committee might also meet on Friday mornings.

**Chair:** How do we all feel about that? I'm comfortable with it. Thursday afternoon and Friday mornings, if needed, if that fits better with the schedule.

**Clerk Assistant:** So we'll coordinate together, but, of course, we'll be in contact with the committee members as soon as possible so that everyone is aware of when things are happening.

**Chair:** Wonderful. Okay, and then I –

Oh sorry, Minister Hudson.

**Mr. Hudson:** Thank you, Chair.

So the sooner that we can have that firmed up, because I was looking at my schedule; it doesn't matter what day we go, I'm going to have to be making some adjustments. More advanced notice that I can give on rescheduling of meetings that are on, the better for sure.

**Chair:** Okay, absolutely.

And how often are we comfortable meeting? Is it if we can get response from so many of these witnesses, would everyone be comfortable meeting even once a week if that, between now and the sitting, shall we say? There's quite heavy work, you know, amount of work in our work plan.

Sonny Gallant.

**Mr. Gallant:** Chair, we may have to look at an evening meeting as well. Some more witnesses may not be able to come during the day.

**Chair:** That's a really good point; absolutely.

**Mr. Gallant:** In West Prince or Prince County.

**Chair:** I'm not opposed to that at all. Yes.

**Ms. Bell:** (Indistinct)

**Chair:** Okay. Do we need anything else on scheduling? Is that sufficient?

**Clerk Assistant:** No, that's good.

Like I said, I'll be in contact with everyone as soon as we can so that people can put those dates in their calendars and know what's happening. So you'll be hearing from me.

**Chair:** Great. Is there anything else that anyone would like to bring forward before we adjourn?

**Some Hon. Members:** (Indistinct)

**Chair:** Right away.

**Clerk Assistant:** Tonight, first day of school.

**Chair:** A motion to adjourn, anyone?

**Mr. Hudson:** (Indistinct)

**Chair:** Minister Hudson, okay.

All in favour?

**Some Hon. Members:** Aye.

**Chair:** All right, we are adjourned.

Thanks, everyone.

The Committee adjourned