

Report of the Select Special Auditor General Search Committee

April 12, 2010



Select Special Auditor General
Search Committee
801 Legislature Annex
9718 - 107 Street
Edmonton, Alberta T5K 1E4
(780) 427-1350
karen.sawchuk@assembly.ab.ca



SELECT SPECIAL AUDITOR GENERAL SEARCH COMMITTEE

CHAIR:

LEN MITZEL, MLA
Cypress-Medicine Hat

DEPUTY CHAIR:

TY LUND, MLA
Rocky Mountain House

MEMBERS:

LAURIE BLAKEMAN, MLA
Edmonton Centre

ROBIN CAMPBELL, MLA
West Yellowhead

HUGH MacDONALD, MLA
Edmonton Gold Ba

RICHARD MARZ, MLA
Olds-Didsbury-Three Hills

RACHEL NOTLEY, MLA
Edmonton Strathcona

DAVE QUEST, MLA
Strathcona

GEORGE ROGERS, MLA
Leduc-Beaumont-Devon

April 12, 2010

To the Honourable Ken Kowalski
Speaker of the Legislative Assembly
of the Province of Alberta

The Select Special Auditor General Search Committee has the honour to submit its report containing the recommendation of a candidate to the position of Auditor General for consideration by the Legislative Assembly.

Sincerely,

[Original signed by chair]

Len Mitzel, MLA
Chair, Select Special Auditor General
Search Committee

APRIL 2010

Report of the Select Special Auditor General Search Committee

Government Motions

19. Moved by Hon. Mr. Hancock:

Be it resolved that a Select Special Auditor General Search Committee of the Legislative Assembly be appointed, consisting of the following Members, namely:

Mitzel (Chair)	Campbell	Marz
Lund (Deputy Chair)	Lukaszuk	Notley
Blakeman	MacDonald	Rogers

for the purpose of inviting applications for the position of Auditor General and to recommend to the Assembly the applicant it considers most suitable to this position.

1. The Chair and members of the Committee shall be paid in accordance with the schedule of Category A Committees provided in the most current Members' Services Committee Allowances Order.
2. Reasonable disbursements by the Committee for advertising, staff assistance, equipment and supplies, rent, travel, and other expenditures necessary for the effective conduct of its responsibilities shall be paid, subject to the approval of the Chair.
3. In carrying out its responsibilities, the Committee may, with the concurrence of the head of the department, utilize the services of members of the public service employed in that department, and of the staff employed by the Assembly.
4. The Committee may, without leave of the Assembly, sit during a period when the Assembly is adjourned.
5. When its work has been completed, the Committee shall report to the Assembly if it is sitting. During a period when the Assembly is adjourned, the Committee may release its report by depositing a copy with the Clerk and forwarding a copy to each Member of the Assembly.

The question being put, the motion was agreed to.

(November 4, 2009)

COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP

Chair:

Mr. Len Mitzel, MLA
Cypress-Medicine Hat (PC)

Deputy Chair:

Mr. Ty Lund, MLA
Rocky Mountain House (PC)

Members:

Ms Laurie Blakeman, MLA
Edmonton-Centre (LIB)

Mr. Robin Campbell, MLA
West Yellowhead (PC)

Mr. Thomas Lukaszuk, MLA
Edmonton-Castledowns (PC)
(up to February 10, 2010)

Mr. Hugh MacDonald, MLA
Edmonton-Gold Bar (LIB)

Mr. Richard Marz, MLA
Olds-Didsbury-Three Hills (PC)

Ms Rachel Notley, MLA
Edmonton-Strathcona (NDP)

Mr. Dave Quest, MLA
Strathcona (PC)
(appointed February 10, 2010)

Mr. George Rogers, MLA
Leduc-Beaumont-Devon (PC)

RECOMMENDATION

At the April 12, 2010 meeting of the Select Special Auditor General Search Committee, the following recommendation was passed by the Committee:

MOVED by Mr. Quest that the Select Special Auditor General Search Committee approve the report dated April 12, 2010 and recommend the appointment of Merwan N. Saher to the position of Auditor General for a 6-year term and authorize the Speaker to enter into a contract with Mr. Saher effective at the time of the appointment.

SELECTION PROCESS

The Committee held a total of six meetings starting with an organizational meeting on November 19, 2009 and completing its final meeting on April 12, 2010. The Committee, with the assistance of communications and committee support staff from the Legislative Assembly Office, and senior staff from Alberta Corporate Human Resources (CHR), developed guidelines for advertising, a position profile, search timetable, and general procedures.

Advertisements for the position of Auditor General were placed in daily newspapers in Edmonton and Calgary. The advertisement also ran nationally in the Globe and Mail. The advertisement and position profile were posted on the Legislative Assembly of Alberta website, the external Committee website, and were advertised on various accounting institute and professional association on-line job listings as well.

The Committee received a total of 31 applications for the position of Auditor General; 11 of these were from Alberta, 11 were received from candidates in other provinces, and 9 applications were received from outside of Canada; one candidate withdrew his application early in the process. Executive Search, CHR completed comprehensive screening reports for each candidate and the Committee reviewed the résumés along with the screening reports to determine a short-list for preliminary interviews. Prior to the preliminary interviews proceeding, an additional candidate, identified for preliminary interview, withdrew from the competition. Executive Search conducted preliminary interviews with the three remaining candidates and the Committee chose to conduct final interviews with these three candidates. The final interviews were held on March 19, 2010.

After the interview process was completed, it was the decision of the Search Committee that **Merwan N. Saher** be recommended to the Legislative Assembly for appointment as the Auditor General for the Province of Alberta.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The Committee acknowledges the contributions of Ms Trish Mills, Acting Director of Executive Search, and Ms Jean Easton, Executive Search Consultant, Alberta Corporate Human Resources. Ms Mills' and Ms Easton's knowledge and expertise in all matters relating to a search of this nature were invaluable and contributed to the completion of the Committee's mandate in a timely fashion.

Biography of MERWAN N. SAHER

Merwan Saher grew up and was educated in England. Prior to coming to Canada and joining the Office of the Auditor General of Alberta in 1980, Mr. Saher worked as an audit professional in the private sector in Britain and Iran. Mr. Saher became a member of the Institute of Chartered Accountants in England and Wales in 1972, and a member of the Institute of Chartered Accountants of Alberta in 1982.

In his career as a legislative auditor with the Office of the Auditor General of Alberta, Mr. Saher has focused on helping government managers use taxpayer funds wisely and supporting legislators in the accountability process. As the head of Professional Practice, he provided advice on accounting and auditing issues, and worked to minimize the risk of the Office of the Auditor General delivering unprofessional outputs by identifying and introducing better audit methodologies and tools. Promoted to Assistant Auditor General in 1996, Mr. Saher has been responsible for the cost-effective delivery of financial attest and systems audits in a portfolio of ministries. Mr. Saher has also represented the Office of the Auditor General in the work of the Canadian Council of Legislative Auditors.

Mr. Saher has served as a member of the Canadian Institute of Chartered Accountants (CICA) Public Sector Accounting Board Task Force on *Indicators of Financial Condition*, and as a member of the CICA Study Group on *Accounting Bases Used in Canadian Government Budgeting*.

Mr. Saher is married with two adult daughters. He thinks he might hold the record for longest-serving treasurer of a condominium corporation (28 years). Mr. Saher enjoys helping out every year at the Festival of Trees and the Bissell Centre New Year's dinner.