

SEVENTY-THIRD REPORT

OF THE

SALARIES REVIEW COMMISSION

OF THE

REPUBLIC OF TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO

October 29th, 2004

Seventy-Third Report of the Salaries Review Commission

Review of the Terms and Conditions of Service of the office of Deputy Secretary to Cabinet

By letter dated July 1, 2004, His Excellency the President of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago conveyed his approval for the Salaries Review Commission (SRC) to determine the salary and other conditions of service of the office of Deputy Secretary to Cabinet. This office was placed within the purview of the SRC by virtue of Legal Notice No. 118 dated June 14, 2004.

Background

2. In the course of our deliberations on the terms and conditions of service to be applicable to the office of Deputy Secretary to Cabinet, we considered the role of the Cabinet Secretariat which provides administrative support to the Cabinet and Sub-Committees of Cabinet. In essence, the Secretariat is the traditional communication link between Ministries/Departments and the Cabinet as well as between the Public Service and the President and Parliament.

3. We are advised that the Secretary to Cabinet is the administrative head of the Secretariat and that from 1998, that office holder was assisted by the office of Senior Cabinet Affairs Officer in the day-to-day operations of the Secretariat.

4. It is our understanding that over the years the duties and responsibilities of the Senior Cabinet Affairs Officer have become more demanding as a result of the increased scope of activities of the Secretariat as well as the stringent deadlines emanating from weekly meetings. This has necessitated the creation of the office of Deputy Secretary to Cabinet on the establishment of the Cabinet Secretariat.

Role and function of the Deputy Secretary to Cabinet

5. The Commission has noted that the office of Deputy Secretary to Cabinet was created to strengthen the top management structure of the Cabinet Secretariat and provide for the effective delegation of responsibilities such as human resource management functions, including staffing arrangements, certain decision-making functions and for attending meetings. We understand that such delegation is critical to the efficient processing of all matters requiring the approval of Cabinet and the timely articulation and dissemination of relevant decisions to the Public Service and appropriate public sector agencies.

6. In this context, the Deputy Secretary to Cabinet is expected to provide technical and managerial support to the Secretary to Cabinet in planning, organizing, supervising and co-ordinating the functions and services provided by the Cabinet Secretariat. We are also advised that as second in command to the Secretary to Cabinet, the office holder is privy to confidential and sensitive issues and is required to exercise a high level of initiative and diplomacy in the performance of his/her functions.

7. The office holder also serves as the Secretary to the Parliamentary Questions Committee, a major sub-committee of Cabinet and in that capacity, is required to manage the operations of the Committee. As Secretary to the Committee, he/she is required to have intimate knowledge of the status of information relative to questions raised in the House of Representatives as well as in the Senate and to pursue with Ministers and Parliamentary Secretaries the submission of replies. The efficient functioning of the Committee is considered to be critical given the nature of its responsibilities and the implications at the national level of any lapses.

8. The other major duties of the office holder include the following: -

- functioning as secretary of ad-hoc Cabinet-appointed Ministerial Committees;
- collaborating with the Secretary to Cabinet in the formulation of policy and strategic planning as well as in the day-to-day administration of the Secretariat;
- vetting Cabinet Minutes submitted by subordinate staff and collaborating with the Secretary to Cabinet for final vetting of the more complex Minutes;
- vetting the recommendations of the Finance and General Purposes Committee submitted by Cabinet Officers II prior to final vetting by the Secretary to Cabinet;
- assisting the Secretary to Cabinet in the vetting of Cabinet Notes and preparation of the Agenda for weekly meetings of Cabinet;
- supporting the Secretary to Cabinet in servicing Cabinet meetings;
- conducting training in the preparation of Cabinet Notes throughout the Public Service as requested by Ministries/Departments;
- spearheading quality assurance and strategic reform initiatives in the Cabinet Secretariat;
- responding to enquiries from, and providing guidance to, Ministers, Permanent Secretaries and other senior public officers with respect to Cabinet decisions, the status of Cabinet Notes and procedures and policies of Cabinet and Government.

Transport Facilities

- (i) A maximum loan of \$100,000 at a rate of interest of 6% per annum repayable over a period of six (6) years to facilitate the purchase of either: -
 - (a) a new motor vehicle with exemption from Motor Vehicle Tax limited to the amount payable on a vehicle with an engine capacity of 1799cc and exemption from Value Added Tax limited to the amount payable on a vehicle costing \$100,000; or
 - (b) a used motor vehicle with exemption from Special Motor Vehicles Tax limited to the maximum amount payable in respect of Motor Vehicle Tax on a vehicle at (a) above and exemption from Value Added Tax limited to the amount payable on a vehicle costing \$100,000.
- (ii) A loan to cover the cost of Motor Vehicle Insurance premium at a rate of interest of 6% per annum.
- (iii) A maximum loan of \$15,000 at a rate of interest of 6% per annum to effect repairs to a motor vehicle.
- (iv) A Transportation Allowance of \$1,900 per month.

Subsistence Allowance

- (i) \$75 per day when travelling on official business beyond a radius of sixteen (16) kilometres from official headquarters, and where it is necessary to purchase a meal(s).
- (ii) When on official duty in Tobago, the office holder to be eligible for hotel accommodation and meals, as necessary. In the absence of the provision of any meal(s), to be paid \$75 per day.
- (iii) For travel abroad on official business, US\$50 per day, once not in receipt of other allowances for overseas travel, such as those payable under Minister of Finance Circular No. 3 dated March 15, 1999.

Vacation Leave

Thirty (30) calendar days per annum. (The holder of the office to continue to be eligible for the vacation leave provisions set out in the Civil Service Regulations pending the enactment of appropriate legislative amendments to give effect to this vacation leave provision.)

Telephone Facilities

An allowance of \$250 per month.

Medical Benefits

Membership in and entitlement to medical benefits as provided under the UNIMED Group Health Plan.

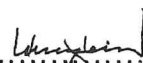
Pension/Gratuity

Entitlement to superannuation benefits in accordance with the provisions of the Pensions Act, Chap. 23:52.

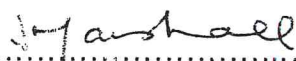
Effective Date

14. We recommend further that the effective date of implementation of the above provisions should be June 14, 2004, the date on which the office was placed within the purview of the Salaries Review Commission.

Dated this 29th day of October, 2004.


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Edward Collier
(Chairman)


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Keith Ortiz


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Joyce Marshall


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Ashton Brereton


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Varun Maharaj