



Standing Committee Ajauqtiit

**Report on the Appointment of the Chief Electoral Officer
for Nunavut**

Fifth Session
First Legislative Assembly
Legislative Assembly of Nunavut

November 2001

David Iqaqrialu, MLA
Chair

Ovide Alakannuark, MLA
Co-Chair

www.assembly.nu.ca

October 16, 2001

Honourable Kevin O'Brien, MLA
Speaker of the Legislative Assembly of Nunavut
Iqaluit, Nunavut

Dear Mr. Speaker:

The Members of the Standing Committee *Ajauqtiit* have completed their work to identify a candidate for appointment to the position of Chief Electoral Officer for Nunavut. As you know, Mr. Speaker, this Committee was charged with the responsibility of identifying a candidate for consideration by the Legislative Assembly, following the Assembly's review of the Report of the Chief Electoral Officer of Nunavut in October 2000.

We are confident that the recommended candidate has the skills and experience to carry out this important work and we respectfully submit this report on behalf of the Committee, for consideration by the Legislative Assembly.

David Iqarialuk
Chair

Ovide Alakannuark
Co-Chair

Standing Committee *Ajauqtiit*

Report on the Appointment of the Chief Electoral Officer for Nunavut

Mandate of the Standing Committee *Ajauqtiit*

The Standing Committee *Ajauqtiit* is a standing committee of the Legislative Assembly of Nunavut. It was established with a broad mandate including:

- To consider issues related to the Government of Nunavut's obligations with respect to the implementation of the Nunavut Land claims Agreement (NLCA), including the activities of the Government of Nunavut in relation to the operation of the boards Commissions and other bodies established by the provisions of the NLCA;
- To review the budget of the Legislative Assembly;
- To recommend the appointment of positions that, by statutory authority, are made by the Legislative Assembly; and
- To consider any other matter referred by the House.

Background

Following the first Nunavut Territorial General Election in 1999, David Hamilton, the Chief Electoral Officer, submitted a report on the election with a number of recommendations for legislative and administrative reforms to the elections process. That report was referred to the Standing Committee *Ajauqtiit* for review. Following extensive consultations, and an in-depth review of existing election legislation, the Standing Committee presented its report to the Legislative Assembly in October 2000. The report contained over 60 recommendations. Those which are most relevant to this report are:

“... a central elections office be established to administer elections in Nunavut, called Elections Nunavut”; and

“... the Government of Nunavut introduce a new *Elections Act* for Nunavut that is written in a manner that is easily understood by voters, candidates and election officials”.

Following the acceptance of the recommendations, the Standing Committee *Ajauqtiit* was directed by the Legislative Assembly to conduct a recruitment campaign to identify a qualified candidate for the position of Chief Electoral Officer (CEO) for Nunavut. The Committee was asked to recommend the appointment of the CEO to the Legislative Assembly, so that an elections office could be established to support the important work of election reform.

This report details the recruitment process used by the Committee and includes the name of a recommended candidate for the position.

Role of the Chief Electoral Officer

The role of the Chief Electoral Officer for Nunavut is outlined in the *Elections Act*. In summary, the CEO is responsible for the strategic management of territorial general elections and by-elections and enforces fairness, impartiality and compliance with the *Elections Act* on the part of all election officers. The CEO is the servant of the Legislative Assembly in carrying out changes to the election process and coordinating the drafting of legislation if it is needed.

The Chief Electoral Officer is an independent officer of the Legislative Assembly, appointed by the Commissioner of Nunavut under section 3 (1) of the *Elections Act* on the recommendation of the Legislative Assembly. The CEO is accountable only to the Legislative Assembly and is independent of executive government.

The first election for the newly established Legislative Assembly of Nunavut was held on February 15th 1999. The election was administered by the Chief Electoral Officer for the Northwest Territories in the absence of an established government. This election, spread over the 19 electoral districts of Nunavut, cost over \$1 million to administer, not including the costs of the office of a Chief Electoral Officer.

Following the election, the Chief Electoral Officer (NWT) submitted a report with a variety of recommendations for the consideration of the Nunavut Legislative Assembly. The Legislative Assembly reviewed the recommendations, and established a process of public consultation to assess not only the recommendations of the CEO, but also to seek input on wider reforms to the electoral process which would better reflect the needs of Nunavummiut.

The Legislative Assembly accepted the 65 recommendations of the Standing Committee *Ajauqtiit*. The newly appointed Chief Electoral Officer will be accountable for implementing those recommendations and incorporating changes into a new Elections Act, in plain language, for approval within the life of the First Legislative Assembly. Some of the priorities include:

- Finding ways of collaborating and cooperating with other parties administering their own election processes (Federal Government/Inuit Organizations/Municipalities/etc) to achieve cost savings and greater efficiency and effectiveness;
- Establishing a boundaries commission to consider reforms to electoral boundaries;
- Shortening the election period;

- A more effective public education program on the electoral process, the rights of all parties and the penalties for offenses.

The Chief Electoral Officer is also responsible for ensuring that the rights of candidates and the electorate are well served through the evolution of progressive and responsive procedures and the provision of an effective public education program. The CEO will be challenged to train local returning officers and other election officials to ensure that they can perform their duties in an acceptable manner, to ensure that the decentralized election machinery is in a constant state of readiness and, to enforce compliance with the provisions of the *Elections Act*. The Chief Electoral Officer is also accountable for financial management of election expenditures charged to public funds.

The Recruitment Process

The Selection Committee

Building on, and benefiting from, their experience in successfully recruiting the Conflict of Interest Commissioner (now referred to as the Integrity Commissioner), the Languages Commissioner and the Information and Privacy Commissioner, the Committee established a standardized process for statutory appointments in support of the Legislative Assembly. Standard operating procedures were drafted and approved for ongoing recruitment work to ensure that a fair, consistent, objective and defensible process is followed for all appointments.

The Standing Committee established a sub-committee to conduct the interviews consisting of David Iqarialuk, Chair, Ovide Alakannuark, Co-Chair, Hunter Tootoo, Member, Rebekah Willaims, Member and Raymond Nigeotsiak who represented Nunavut Tunngavik Incorporated. An outline of the costs of the recruitment campaign is attached under Appendix A.

Advertising

The Committee started its work with the development of an advertisement (Appendix B), which was advertised across Nunavut in Inuktitut, Innuinaqtun and English and in selected locations in southern Canada for the period July 4th to July 26, 2001.

Screening

A total of **seven** applications were received. Of these, three were from Nunavut. The remaining **four** were from southern Canada. The Committee agreed to use standardized selection criteria to choose the candidates with the most appropriate qualifications.

These criteria emphasized the value of northern experience and knowledge of Nunavut, but the main emphasis was on two key areas:

- Management experience, with proven skills in developing subordinate staff to take on gradually increasing responsibilities;
- Ability to administer complex legislation.

A total of two candidates appeared to have the basic qualifications to take on the job. This resulted in a short list of two candidates who were then interviewed by the Committee.

The Interviews

A list of standardized questions was developed by the Committee to ensure that interviews were thorough and that candidates were treated consistently and fairly. Interviews were conducted by the Selection Committee in Iqaluit on September 25th, 2001. A point rating system was used to assess the candidate's responses to questioning and to rank them.

Reference Checks

The selection committees completed the interviews and completed reference checks for both candidates interviewed and, as a result, brought forward a report and a recommendation to the Standing Committee for review. A listing of the meetings conducted by the selection committee is attached as Appendix C.

Conclusion & Recommendation

The Committee is unanimous in recommending to the Legislative Assembly, the appointment of Sandy Kusugak to the position of Chief Electoral Officer for Nunavut pursuant to section 3 (1) of the *Elections Act*.

Ms. Sandy Kusugak strongly demonstrated throughout the interview her extensive knowledge and experience in administering and conducting elections as reflected in the selections committees ratings, not only territorial but federal, municipal and with Inuit organizations. This was further confirmed by her past supervisors and employers through the reference check process.

Ms. Sandy Kusugak's biography is attached as Appendix D.

APPENDIX "A"

Recruitment Costs – Chief Electoral Officer for Nunavut

Advertising

Nunatsiaq News	\$2,353.00
News North	\$2,785.96
Globe Mail	<u>\$5,913.60</u>
Sub-total	\$ 11,052.56

Interviews

Applicant travel	\$1729.90
Applicant Expenses	\$ 187.30
Committee Expenses	<u>\$2616.71</u>
Sub-total	\$ 4,533.91
Total Recruitment Costs	<u>\$15,586.53</u>

APPENDIX "B"



Chief Electoral Officer

Applications are invited for the position of Chief Electoral Officer of Nunavut.

The Chief Electoral Officer is appointed pursuant to Section 3(1) of Nunavut's *Elections Act*. The position is an independent officer of the Legislative Assembly, and reports to the Assembly directly. The Chief Electoral Officer is responsible for the strategic management of territorial general and by-elections in accordance with the provisions of Nunavut's *Elections Act*. The CEO exercises general direction and supervision over the administrative conduct of an election and enforces, on the part of all elections officers, fairness, impartiality and compliance with the *Elections Act*.

The Chief Electoral Officer is also accountable to the Legislative Assembly of Nunavut for the establishment of the Office of the Chief Electoral Officer of Nunavut, implementation of any recommendations of the Assembly for changes to the administration of elections in Nunavut and for co-coordinating the drafting of any amendments to the *Elections Act*.

The ideal candidate will possess the following attributes:

- A thorough understanding of electoral law, processes and policy;
- Experience in the administration of elections;
- Knowledge of Nunavut and its people;
- Superior communication skills;
- Experience in working in a cross-cultural environment; and
- Integrity, diplomacy and sound judgment.

Remuneration will be based on qualifications and experience.

Please submit applications by July 6th, 2001, 5:00 p.m. (EST) to:
Chair, Standing Committee *Ajauqtiit*
c/o Office of the Clerk
Legislative Assembly of Nunavut
Box 1200
Iqaluit, Nunavut, X0A 0H0
Tel: (867) 975-5000 Fax: (867) 975-5191
A copy of the Elections Act can be obtained from
<http://www.nunavutcourtofjustice.ca>

APPENDIX "C"

Meetings of the Standing Committee *Ajauqtiit*

To select the Chief Electoral Officer for Nunavut

Meeting Date

Purpose of Meeting

July 12th, 2001

Review the Selection Procedures Manual

July 12, 2001

Screening of Application

September 24th, 2001

Review and finalize Interview Question

September 25th, 2001

Interviewing the Candidates

October 25th, 2001 Review of
Draft Report & Recommendation

November 13, 2001

Presentation to Full Caucus

APPENDIX “D”

Biography –SANDY KUSUGAK

Sandy Kusugak is a long-time Nunavummiut from Rankin Inlet. She holds a Bachelors Degrees in Psychology, Sociology and Education from Queen's University in Kingston Ontario.

Sandy has worked extensively in the elections field. She has developed an in depth understanding of the rules and processes governing elections at the local, regional, territorial and national level. Sandy also served on the Nunavut Electoral Boundaries Commission, which established the constituencies for Nunavut's first Legislative Assembly.

Aside from her elections experience, Sandy is an effective communicator and manager. She is comfortable working with the media and is aware of the challenge of coordinating public information campaigns in a multi-lingual environment. She has taken on large organizational projects such as the Nunavut Education Symposium and the Nunavut Conversation.

Sandy is able to effectively present complex ideas and information in plain language. Her experience in document layout ensures that, not only are her messages clear, but are highly accessible to all.

In her public life, Sandy serves as a Board Member with the Movement for Canadian Literacy and the Nunavut Literacy Council. In the past she has served

as a member of the NWT Literacy Council, the Kivalliq Divisional Board of Education and District Education Authority, the Regional Cultural Industries Committee, Hamlet Council and many local committees.

Sandy is fully fluent in English and has an intermediate knowledge of spoken and written Inuktitut.