

**The Government Minute**

On the Report of the Standing Public Accounts Committee on the  
Special Report of the Auditor General on  
**the Purchase of a Helicopter by the Royal Cayman Islands Police**

By the Honourable Minister for Finance, Tourism & Development  
W. McKeever Bush, OBE, JP

## **INTRODUCTION**

Madam Speaker, in accordance with the requirements of Section 77(7) of the Legislative Assembly Standing Orders (1997 Revision), the Government Minute **for the Purchase of a Helicopter by the Royal Cayman Islands Police (“RCIP”)** is hereby being presented to the Legislative Assembly.

As Members are aware, the Government Minute constitutes the Government’s response to the Report of the Public Accounts Committee (PAC) on the Report of the Auditor General **on the Purchase of a Helicopter by the RCIP.**

This particular Minute is in response to the PAC Report that was laid on the Table of this House on **25<sup>th</sup> February 2010.**

Madam Speaker, the statements contained herein should be regarded as that of the Government, and are based on the views of respective Chief Officers, Heads of Departments and Managing Directors within the Cayman Islands Public Service.

## **THE GOVERNMENT MINUTE**

Madam Speaker, the Government accepts a number of the points made by the Auditor General. It must be noted that this was the first time the Cayman Islands Government had purchased a helicopter and many valuable lessons have been learnt.

The Government accepts that they should have acquired the services of an expert prior to the purchase decision being made. That expert would have managed the purchase process from the initial specification through to the helicopter becoming operational. However, experts were employed in May 2007 and in November 2008, to fulfil this role and to negotiate the price of the helicopter, the refit and its shipping to the Cayman Islands via the United States.

However, Madam Speaker, the Government does not agree with the Auditor General, that the helicopter should be sold, because of the auto pilot issue and the flying time away from land. The helicopter, under the command, has been able to carry out its full police function in Grand Cayman, Cayman Brac and Little Cayman.

Madam Speaker, the Government accepts that there was a level of misunderstanding and miscommunication on the capabilities of the helicopter that were not related to police operations, namely medi-vac from the Sister Islands and search and rescue. The helicopter will be part of any search and rescue operation but will not be able to winch up persons from the sea. It is believed that this misunderstanding was a result of not having the relevant expertise in place at the commencement of the procurement exercise. The helicopter under the new command is now capable of all police operations on all three islands both on the land and sea; however there are restrictions on the type of persons it can transport over water, namely those that do not have the required safety training.

The Government accepts that there was a variation between the initial budget estimate and the final cost.

Madam Speaker, the Government also accepts that the refit costs were higher than anticipated, but the main component of the increase was the replacement of the gear box, which was not anticipated and only came to light after and in depth inspection prior to reassembly of the rotors in the United States.

The helicopter arrived in the Islands in March 2010 having flown from Louisiana USA and arrived in full operational capability. The helicopter has been issued its Police Air Operations Certificate under new command Police procedures plays an integral role in enhancing the capabilities of the RCIP.

### **ACKNOWLEDGEMENT**

In closing, Madam Speaker, the Government wishes to express its thanks to the Commissioner of Police of the RCIP and the Chief Officer for the Portfolio of Internal & External Affairs for their assistance with the compilation of this Government Minute and for their support in the implementation of the initiatives contained within.

Thank you.