

TBS Issues Review for Friday February 17

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Attachments: Governments investing in agri.docx (81.35 kB)

Good morning!

Here is the Treasury Board Secretariat Issues Review.
Cabinet Top Issues for today will be sent later.

Minister Sandals is mentioned in the Brantford Expositor. She attended an event to mark the province's investment in the Agri-Food sector. \$100,000 was given yesterday to Solis Foods. "Most people don't realize the significance of the agri-food sector," said Sandals. "It accounts for one in nine jobs in Ontario and is the second biggest economic sector."

PENSION ACCOUNT:

QP Briefing reports the AG says that until she sees a letter that says government can use that pension money with permission – her office can't give its stamp of approval on this issue. The article notes the government "isn't inclined to draft" a letter. **Treasury Board President Liz Sandals** is quoted from her statement: "They (the panel) concluded that the government does not need a letter from either of the unions because the joint pension agreements spell out how the surplus will be dealt with. They also concluded that there are no public-sector accounting standard requirements for any additional letter to be in place specifying when or by how much contributions will be reduced beyond the joint pension plan agreements already in place." This article also includes quotes from MPP Lisa MacLeod and OPSEU's Warren Thomas. **Article in TBS Media Watch.**

The Toronto Star (Feb 16) reported the Auditor General is demanding proof in writing from the unions that they are okay with the government using taxpayer-funded pension surpluses for accounting purposes. The article says the Ag is "escalating a \$10.7 billion standoff" with the government over taxpayer-funded pension surpluses. "There has been no suggestion the government intends to dip into the pension funds, which would be illegal. The question is whether the pension surplus can be counted as an asset or not at all." The AG was quoted: "It is not my money. That money is for the benefit of employees and retirees ... so it's not my pension. It's not my budget deficit." **Article in TBS Media Watch**

The Windsor Star (A7) has a Canadian Press report that says the AG is not satisfied after the expert panel's report on the \$10.7 billion pension dispute. Auditor general Bonnie Lysyk's quote is used: "Show me the letter that says you can use that pension money with permission, with an agreement," she said Thursday. "Until that happens the bottom line is this office can't give its stamp of approval on this particular issue." The article notes this is not the first time the Liberal government has clashed with the auditor general - the former energy minister suggested the electricity file was too complicated for Lysyk, and she has frequently suggested that partisan ads are being funded by taxpayer dollars. **Article in TBS Media Watch.**

COMPENSATION and HR:

The Globe and Mail (A12), and QP Briefing report government and doctors are back at the bargaining table. Ontario's doctors have been without a contract for almost three years. The Ontario Medical Association has been threatening to launch unspecified job action against the government, but it is not clear what will happen now that talks are back on. **Articles in TBS Media Watch.**

The Barrie Examiner (A1) reports Georgian College is laying off administrators, reassigning teaching faculty and will sell Kempenfelt Conference Centre to help make up an \$8.6-million shortfall this year on its now-balanced \$195-million-plus budget. (Ontario Public Services Employees Union (OPSEU) Local 350 represents 278 full-time faculty and 299 part-time faculty at Georgian. An additional 368 faculty members teach on a part-time basis and are not members of the faculty union.) **Article in TBS Media Watch**

The Toronto Star (TorSUN) reports 73 TTC employees have been fired as a result of an ongoing investigation into an alleged insurance fraud scheme. 600 employees are being investigated for involvement into the scandal which centres on a local orthotics store. **Articles in TBS Media Watch.**

The Globe and Mail(A12) reports a former senior executive at the Public Health Agency (PHAC) of Canada regularly screamed at staff and subjected them to "physical displays of anger," including slamming desks and throwing papers, according to a report by the federal government's public sector integrity commissioner. But the frequent tirades and fits of rage did not lead to the executive being fired - instead, the executive left the public health agency before the investigation was finished and moved to another government job, where new bosses have promised closer monitoring. The person is not named in the report, but uses the pronoun "he". A spokeswoman for the office could not say how much the nearly three-year investigation into the former PHAC executive cost. **Article in TBS Media Watch**

The Toronto Star reports (A1) the Ontario Labour Relations Board is resisting calls to release documents related to its public hearings - even though the public hearings can be reported by the media. In contrast, documents filed as part of a court proceeding, including those containing personal information, are presumptively public and can easily be accessed the same day at the courthouse. At issue is the Toronto Star's request in 2014 to review documents relating to a dispute between the Laborers' International Union of North America (LIUNA) and its Local 183 and whether the latter should have been placed under trusteeship due to alleged improprieties. While reporters were permitted to access several boxes of documents at the OLRB offices, and to make copies of certain materials, the board refused requests for additional documents, and now demands that the Star return the copies of documents obtained through the freedom of information request. Even though the tribunal system was created to take cases out of the overcrowded court system, and into a more efficient process, a Star editorial noted last week that "they depart dramatically from open court rules when it comes to providing records." **Article in TBS Media Watch.**

TREASURY BOARD :

The Toronto Sun (A16) has a commentary on Toronto's 2 per cent tax hike. **Article in TBS Media Watch.**

The Toronto Star (A16) has an editorial on the Financial Transactions and Reports Analysis Centre of Canada (known as Fintrac) that has refused to identify the only bank

known to have broken its rules -- despite the fact that it regularly names smaller companies that fail to follow its regulations. The piece says there is no reason not to name the mystery bank, and plenty of reasons to do so. **Article in TBS Media Watch.**

The Toronto Sun(A5) reports Mayor Tory said the "provincial legislation that governs Toronto - the City of Toronto Act - needs a "re-think" in light of Premier Kathleen Wynne's flip-flop on his plan to toll the Gardiner Expressway and Don Valley Parkway." Tory called on government to have the "courage" to give Toronto more control over its future. **Article in TBS Media Watch.**

The Ottawa Citizen (A3) has a piece by David Reevely that says provincial funding is crucial to pay for Ottawa's rail plan. He writes the project has crept up from about \$2.9 billion to \$3.6 billion. **Article in TBS Media Watch.**

The Globe and Mail (B8) reports Airbnb's chief marketing office says the company is looking at its ad strategy and will expand travel services. **Article in TBS Media Watch.**

The Toronto Star (B1) reports Ford Canada is committed to investing in Ontario. Ford has reaffirmed it will invest \$700 million improvements for plants in Oakville and Windsor. **Article in TBS Media Watch.**

I.T. and OPEN GOVERNMENT:

London Free Press (A3) reports for a second year, London has cracked a Top 20 list of Canadian municipalities committed to making data freely available. **Article in TBS Media Watch**

The Windsor Star(A1) reports Windsor is at risk of a significant cyber attack, with hackers targeting personal information of employees and citizens in order to extort money. **Article in TBS Media Watch**

GENERAL GOVERNMENT and FYI:

The Ottawa Sun (A8 – Antonella Artuso) writes on a new poll that says 18 per cent think Premier Wynne is doing a good job. "I would say that she has improved from atrocious to abysmal," Mainstreet Research president Quito Maggi said Thursday of the 4% bump. "That's still a long, long way from where she needs to be to have any chance of a comeback." The poll found that among decided or leaning voters, 39% back the Progressive Conservatives, 29% support the Liberals, 27% give the nod to the NDP and 4% favour the Greens. **Article in TBS Media Watch.**

CALENDAR:

NDP Leader Horwath to hold a press conference
10:00 a.m. / Toronto: Ontario NDP Leader Andrea Horwath holds a press conference to discuss the upcoming legislative session and the priorities of the New Democratic caucus. (Media Studio, Queen's Park)

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