

May 3, 2016

Honourable Heather Stefanson
Minister of Justice and Attorney-General
Room 104 Legislative Building
Winnipeg, Manitoba R3C 0V8

Dear Colleague,

Thank you for agreeing to serve Manitoba as Minister of Justice and Attorney General. Together, our party has been given a mandate to restore trust in government and improve the lives of Manitobans and their families. This is a high honour and privilege we have been given. It will be our focus every day in government.

At the outset, I want to remind you of the need to comport yourself at all times with personal and professional integrity as a representative of our new government. I insist we adhere to the highest possible standards of accountability and respect in the conduct of the province's business. Accordingly, I expect you to be fully aware and compliant with all ethical rules and guidelines currently established as well as those which will be part of our Open Government Initiative.

Most Improved Province

We asked for and received a mandate from Manitobans to improve our province in several key areas. We will be judged on how well we deliver on this. This government will relentlessly focus on these results. I expect us to be a government of results. We must strive each day to deliver high quality public services to citizens at reasonable costs to taxpayers.

A fundamental part of our platform commitment to Manitobans is to ensure our province improves in key areas. All ministers are expected to support and deliver on all of these commitments with colleagues. As Minister of Justice, you have a key role to play in making Manitoba the national leader of Open Governments, through the sequential adoption of legislative measures designed to enhance openness, transparency, and accountability.

Your Mandate

As Minister of Justice and Attorney General, you are the lead Minister responsible for delivering on the following platform commitments:

- Bring in Manitoba's first Open Government bill which will establish new, higher standards for transparency, accountability and MLA ethics, open contracting procedures, and give real authority to independent Legislative officers to investigate and report.
- Provide the Conflict of Interest Commissioner with the power to investigate alleged MLA breaches of conflict legislation and recommend appropriate dispositions to the Legislative Assembly.
- The Commissioner will have the powers and privileges of a commissioner under The Manitoba Evidence Act and will be able to take complaints directly from the public.
- Allow the Auditor General to hire auditors independently, as requested by the Auditor General.
- Empower the Auditor General to review all government advertising to ensure that it is nonpartisan and information-based only.
- Allow advertising by crown corporations operating in a monopolistic environment only to focus on a specific business or social objectives and not engage in simple branding.
- Ensure that MLA mail outs and publications adhere to non-partisan publication rules.
- Ensure that all by-elections are called within six months of a vacancy unless they occur within one year from a general election.
- Establish a fixed election period as recommended by Elections Manitoba so that the start date of the election is known while adhering to the current fixed Election Day act requirement.
- Permit the Commissioner of Elections to appear at the annual Elections Manitoba Legislative Committee to respond to questions regarding ethical conduct during elections.
- In consultation with the Commissioner of Elections, amend provincial election legislation to provide sanctions for violation of election rules.
- Create an Open Data portal to provide government collected data, that is non personal or confidential, in an accessible, machine readable and free basis.
- In consultation with the Manitoba Ombudsman, strengthen access to information including the creation of a proactive disclosure system for a variety of types of information and documents that are currently only available through Freedom of Information application processes.
- Ensure taxpayer paid public opinion research is free from political manipulation and serves the interests of those who paid for it by requiring it be disclosed publicly within six months of being received by government.
- Transfer authority for the use of the Manitoba Legislature and grounds from Manitoba Infrastructure and Trade to the non-partisan Speaker of the Legislative Assembly.

- Cancel the NDP vote tax subsidy for political parties saving taxpayers \$2.4 million over the next four years.
- Legislate financial reporting requirements and immediate mandatory disclosure of all untendered contracts, such as Tiger Dams.

As Minister of Justice and Attorney General, you will work to reduce the recidivism rate through an innovative social impact bond program.

Working With Manitobans and the Public Service

Our government will be a listening government. Our government will be a responsible and responsive government. As a minister and representative of this new government, I expect you to work constructively and cooperatively with citizens and stakeholders to hear their views and communicate the decisions and priorities of the government. Having secured the people's trust in this election, we must work hard every day to earn it anew.

Manitoba's civil service will be a key partner with us to deliver on our commitments and serve the public. Our commitment to protecting front line services for people and the jobs of those who deliver them is one I expect all ministers to work towards.

I made a decision at the outset to reduce the size of Cabinet and set a new tone at the top in ensuring value in government services. That tone at the top extends to how I expect you and your colleagues to work with your departmental officials and other civil servants you encounter in the course of your professional duties. I expect you to forge a collaborative working relationship with your deputy minister and senior officials. I also expect you to be accessible to officials within your department, to listen to their advice, to hear their concerns, and understand that while they are here to serve in a professional non-partisan manner, they are also our employees who deserve our respect.

Cabinet, Caucus and the Legislature

Being a minister brings significant responsibility with your new duties. That responsibility extends to ensuring you are fully briefed and knowledgeable about your portfolio issues and obligations when engaging with colleagues at Cabinet and in the Legislature. I expect all ministers to know their files and bring a collegial working style to making decisions at Cabinet and Cabinet Committees.

You have been named Deputy Premier and a member of Priorities and Planning Committee. You have also been named second acting Minister of Health, Seniors and Active Living.

Caucus is a vital part of our governance model. I remind you that all caucus members are full and equal colleagues in the work and direction of this government. I expect you to work closely at all times with your caucus colleagues providing them with information as they carry out their duties and being accessible to them in the conduct of their duties.

From time to time, individual caucus members will be assigned to work with you on specific projects by me. You will treat them as full cabinet colleagues in this capacity.

The Legislative Assembly remains the foundation of our democracy and is essential for representative and accountable government. We shall treat it respectfully. I expect all ministers to be briefed, ready, and available to answer questions, explain decisions, and engage colleagues in the Legislature as well as citizens that appear before it.

As we work together, I will be evaluating individual and collective performance of ministers as they deliver their mandates and support and work collaboratively with ministerial and caucus colleagues.

Manitobans expect us to work for them as a team. I know I can count on your personal support and commitment to do so as you shall have my personal support and commitment to work with you in your new duties and responsibilities.

We have been given a rare privilege to serve our province. I know you are as grateful as I am for this opportunity. Let us make Manitobans proud once more of their government.

Sincerely,

Original signed by Brian Pallister, Premier

Premier Brian Pallister