



Nunavut Canada

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF NUNAVUT

Nunavut Leadership Forum:

Election of a Minister

Official Report

Wednesday, April 20, 2022

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Members Present:

Hon. David Akeagok, Hon. P.J. Akeagok, Hon. Tony Akoak, Mr. Bobby Anavilok, Ms. Janet Brewster, Hon. Pamela Gross, Mr. George Hickes, Hon. David Joanasi, Mr. Joelle Kaerner, Ms. Mary Killiktee, Hon. Lorne Kusugak, Hon. Adam Lightstone, Hon. John Main, Mr. Solomon Malliki, Hon. Margaret Nakashuk, Ms. Karen Nutarak, Mr. Daniel Qavvik, Hon. Joanna Quassa, Mr. Inagayuk Quqqiaq, Mr. Alexander Sammurtok, Mr. Joe Savikataaq, Mr. Craig Simailak.

>> *Meeting commenced at 14:29*

Chairman (Mr. Akoak): Welcome back, everyone. I will call this meeting of the Nunavut Leadership Forum to order. We said our prayer an hour ago, so it should be strong enough to carry us through for the rest of the day.

>> *Laughter*

Adoption of Agenda

It is my duty to convene today's proceedings of the Nunavut Leadership Forum.

All members have copies of the procedures for the leadership selection process in front of them. The procedures have been agreed to by Full Caucus.

A copy of today's agenda is also in front of the members. Do members agree to adopt the agenda?

Some Members: Agreed.

Nominations for a Cabinet Position

Chairman: We will now proceed to the selection of a member of the Executive Council of Nunavut.

Following the close of nominations, each candidate has up to five minutes to make remarks.

I remind members that if you are nominated, you must immediately accept or decline the nomination.

The floor is now open for nominations.
Ms. Nutarak.

Ms. Nutarak: I nominate Craig Simailak.

Chairman: Thank you. Member Simailak, do you accept the nomination?

Mr. Simailak: Yes, I do. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Chairman: Thank you. The member has accepted the nomination. Are there any other nominations? Mr. Sammurtok.

Mr. Sammurtok: I nominate Solomon Malliki. Thank you. Chairman: Member Malliki, do you accept the nomination?
Mr. Malliki: I accept.

Chairman: Thank you. The member has accepted the nomination. Are there any other nominations? Mr. Quqqiaq.

Mr. Quqqiaq: Thank you. I would like to nominate, from Iqaluit-Sinaa, Janet Brewster. Thank you.

Chairman: Thank you. Ms. Brewster, do you accept the nomination?

Ms. Brewster: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I decline.

Chairman: The member has declined the nomination. Any other nominations?
Ms. Brewster.

Ms. Brewster: I nominate Mr. Savikataaq.

Chairman: Mr. Savikataaq, do you accept the nomination?

Mr. Savikataaq: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yes, I do.

Chairman: The member has accepted the nomination. Are there any other nominations? Mr. Quqqiaq.

Mr. Quqqiaq: Thank you. I will nominate George Hickes. Thank you.

Chairman: Does Mr. Hickes accept the nomination?

Mr. Hickes: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I decline. Thank you.

Chairman: The member has declined. Any other nominations? Thank you. There being no more nominations, we will now proceed to the candidates' remarks. Each member has up to five minutes to make remarks. We will proceed in alphabetical order by surname. Mr. Malliki.

Mr. Malliki (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you, Alexander, for nominating me.

I will talk a little bit about what I have done. I used to be a bylaw officer in Naujaat and I have held board and committee positions for the hamlet council and I used to be a mayor as well, and I was also a school student counsellor for ten years. I also had my

own outfitting business. As well, I have been chairman and also a committee member of the search and rescue group for five years. I served one term as a board member for the housing authority and I know how it operates now. I had a job once as a manager of a mining company.

I can do what needs to be done no matter what it is; I can try it even if it is challenging or hard. I can deal with those things because I have dealt with them before within my previous job experience in anything challenging. If it is with counselling or mental health, I have worked on all of those and also emergency services, and I can manage things that are being done and I can do those things. I want to represent and help the people of Nunavut and I will keep representing Coral Harbour and Naujaat even if I become minister and I can do that. I am committed to my position here and my family is committed to this as well. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. We will now proceed to the next candidate. Mr. Savikataaq.

Mr. Savikataaq (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am trying to get elected as a minister right now and I know I can do the job, as I have been a minister previously and portfolios I have held were (interpretation ends) CGS, Environment, Family Services, Nunavut Housing Corporation, Economic Development and Transportation, (interpretation) and I would not need to be trained or educated because I served as a minister for six years.

(interpretation ends) Mr. Speaker, I am running on my experience and ability to

get the job done. Mr. Speaker, I have been a minister for six years, I've had a number of portfolios, and I have been an MLA now since 2013. I work well with both sides of the table here, the ministers and cabinet, same with all of the regular MLAs. I have done both; I am a good communicator with both.

If I am selected as minister by my peers here, when we're in the House, you will get your answers from me. It may not be the answers that you want to hear at times, but you will get an answer and as minister, I have ran whatever department I was given that people received answers. That's important. You don't just talk around the issue; you give them what they need to hear. It might not be what they want to hear but what they need to hear.

I also have a good judgment of the situation on hand and I don't mind making decisions and I have made tough decisions at times. You make the decision at the time with the best information that you have at the time. If you are wrong, I am not afraid to admit it and say that I was wrong because there has been new information or newer or better information, and I have done that in the past.

Mr. Speaker, I think my track record will speak for itself that I have worked hard in whatever portfolio I have worked at and I hope that my colleagues will look into that and will agree with me.

(interpretation) Mr. Speaker, I will try to run for minister and I want to help all the people of Nunavut. I hand myself to the people of Nunavut and I will work hard as a minister. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Chairman: Thank you. We will now proceed to the next candidate. Mr. Simailak.

Mr. Simailak (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Good afternoon, colleagues, and to the people of Baker Lake, I hope you have a good day. Karen Nutarak, I thank you for nominating me. You asked if I would be interested in becoming a minister.

(interpretation ends) First of all, as part of my history as a person, I have lived all of my life in Baker Lake, aside from a year in Yellowknife.

I have sat on the hamlet council three times and as deputy mayor at one time. I have been a member of the Baker Lake Housing Association three times. The last time I resigned was when I became an MLA during the by-election in Baker Lake.

I have also sat on the community liaison committee for Agnico Eagle when they first opened up in Baker Lake. There was a lot of work to do with them as they dealt with the socio-economic impacts that come with an operating mine. I have also sat on the community liaison committee for AREVA Resources as they were exploring for uranium close to Baker Lake and there needed to be collaboration between the community of Baker Lake and the company.

I sat on the Inuit Employment and Planning Committee with the Qulliq Energy Corporation; I actually worked there for 20 years. It was a great learning experience and we made some changes in there that have helped to get more

Inuit working for the Qulliq Energy Corporation, and I am very proud of that.

I have also volunteered a few years of minor hockey in Baker Lake and the Qamani'tuaq Qiniqtiit (search and rescue).

Earlier I mentioned my previous job at the Qulliq Energy Corporation. I was fortunate enough to spend over the course of five summers travelling through most of Nunavut's communities. I have been to all except for three. I tried to get to the last three, but it did not work out due to weather conditions and other work requirements back in Baker Lake.

I have seen many things in my travels which I have been using here as well in this House to help to try to advocate for our needs. I have always tried to look at our territory as a whole. We are quite spread out but share a lot of the same needs and wants. I have always tried to be open minded, work with people, and come to an agreement of some sort through collaboration.

One of my priorities as minister would be elder care and how we can provide better care. It is a moving mechanism that needs constant attention. We have to start considering it as quite urgent and we have to work hard to accomplish that using collaboration and *Inuit Qaujimagat*.

There are many communities within Nunavut and there are elders out there who don't need to leave the territory; they should be able to stay home. We have to think about what infrastructure to put up that we can provide help to elders. We have to study and start

working on that. I love our elders and it is quite obvious.

Another priority I want to work on as minister along with the fellow cabinet members is our Arctic College community learning centres. I think all of our communities have community learning centres. What other courses can be made available? For example, a lot of people want to work at the mines, but they don't have the education and/or they can't attend classes during the day as they have a day job. There are other options we can look at, such as evening and weekend courses. Let's use Qanuqturniq to make that happen.

There are many people working at the mines making good income, but they cannot get their own homes. I believe it's time we look at and continue to look at making changing to the Nunavut Housing Corporation home buyers program. A lot of mine workers have the disposable income to become homeowners, but the program needs some more tweaking. I think that is very important.

The previous government has been putting in tremendous work to make changes for the betterment of Nunavummiut, and I believe we can continue building on that and making changes to meet today's demands. Let's strive towards that. These priorities also happen to be some of the same priorities that we built together with the Katujjiluta mandate that we put together in Cambridge Bay. It was quite the learning experience. We had some fun and laughs, some of it on my account.

Thank you for your consideration for me to be minister. I would work hard for the

betterment of Nunavummiut. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Questioning Candidates for a Cabinet Position

Chairman: Thank you to all of the candidates. I will now review the procedures for the question period for candidates for the Executive Council.

Members may ask one question of the candidates.

As Chair, I will exercise discretion with respect to the order in which candidates are invited to respond to questions, and I will enforce reasonable limitations on the length of questions and answers.

Do any members have any questions for the candidates? Mr. Kaernerk.

Mr. Kaernerk: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. To all of the three candidates, congratulations. My question is: why should I vote for you? That is my question. (interpretation) Thank you.

Chairman: Thank you. Mr. Simailak.

Mr. Simailak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you, member, for the question. Because I want the seat.

>> *Laughter*

No, like I said in my speech, we have to look at ways of how we can help Nunavummiut. We have to work collaboratively and look at any options that are available out there to see what is best for Nunavummiut. We have many needs and wants, but we have to work together to try to make it happen and

move Nunavut forward. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Mr. Savikataaq.

Mr. Savikataaq: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Why should anyone here vote for me? I think they should vote for me and I hope you all vote for me, for I am running on my experience.

We have roughly three and half years left already. We need someone that can become a minister that can just go right now. There would be no learning curve in whatever portfolio I get. There would be a slight learning curve to get to know the portfolio, but in terms of procedure and how a minister runs a department and the duties of a minister, there is no learning curve for myself. I know how to do it; I have done it. That's why I believe that you should vote for me.

Time is short. Four years is going to come by in no time and, if I am selected minister, there is no learning curve, period. I will know how to do the job. Thank you.

Chairman: Thank you. Just a reminder to members: recognize me as the Chair at this time at the leadership forum. I know it's a habit, but it's good. Mr. Malliki.

Mr. Malliki (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The question was why you should vote for me. I thank you for that question. I think we are all capable of learning our roles and going forward, they do not only apply to me; it is also to my community and others that you serve and I have served many. That is part of why I feel I can do the work. Thank you.

Chairman: Okay. Next question from Ms. Killiktee.

Ms. Killiktee (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I want to ask a couple of questions, and I am proud of those nominated for the role. I patronize no one as I doubt that I could do better, and I feel pleased.

The question I wish to pose to the candidates relates to this issue we face in our Inuit regions, namely, the Earth and the lands we inhabit are continuously changing, and based on these ongoing changes, it is becoming critical and urgently needs resolution. This issue is impacting our communities, who need more assistance and resources to combat these changes and adapt to the situation, for example, this winter in one of the communities that I represent.

I asked this as it is a concern whether you can plan for communities where they have the resources they need to serve communities in emergency situations and to support and to plan for and to seek agreement and a vision. My question is what sort of vision you have in supporting communities and we know that this is becoming and increasing more. Thank you.

Chairman: Thank you. Mr. Savikataaq.

Mr. Savikataaq (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The communities work with the Department of Community and Government Services. The communities have staff to come up with (interpretation ends) community emergency plans. (interpretation) Those plans are continually worked on by the Department of Community and Government Services and the hamlets

are constantly involved with any emergency situation or things that come up where they require assistance. The government is always ready to support them.

I, too, would support the communities. The communities are all in Nunavut. We all want to represent the communities and support them, and I agree with you that the communities need support and they do get some support. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Mr. Malliki.

Mr. Malliki (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I also thank you for the question. All communities have their own emergency plans and are supported by the government through this process. As I mentioned, I have dealt with different situations like emergencies and others that are not as urgent, and I would help to try to address this, as the smaller communities require more support in particular. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Mr. Simailak.

Mr. Simailak (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. (interpretation ends) Thank you, Mr. Chairman, Iksivautaaq. Thank you, Ms. Killiktee, for the question. I believe it's important. Yes, all hamlets have an emergency measures plan which is constantly updated.

I believe we can continue to work on making changes with that and once we figure out what each region needs for changes moving forward, we can bring that to the federal government to see what else we can bring into Nunavut to make some changes to help better serve Nunavummiut and be better prepared for

emergencies, such as climate change, to be ready and better serve our communities. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Member Mr. Quqqiaq.

Mr. Quqqiaq: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. If selected minister, will you support the...? My question is: will you support the idea of the elders that are out of the territory coming back to Nunavut? That's my question. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Mr. Malliki.

Mr. Malliki (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you, Joseph, for the question. When I was campaigning, I said that I would make elders a priority and I will continue to work hard on that. I also brought up the issue of elder care when we were in Cambridge Bay. I also wanted to mention the elders that have been sent to residential school in the past. If they can remain in Nunavut and not be sent out of the territory so that they can be at home, I would prefer that. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Chairman: Thank you. Mr. Simailak.

Mr. Simailak (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) Ma'na, Mr. Quqqiaq, for the question. Yes, I do support elders coming back to Nunavut. That was actually my number one priority, elder care, when I ran for MLA back in Baker Lake last fall.

We the government could be looking at and should look at other alternatives of how we can help support elders to live not only in Nunavut but in their home community, whether it be infrastructure

that has 24-hour care or assisted living in their own unit; home care workers maybe. If we had the capacity and service workers to continue to work on that... We have that right now within Nunavut. Home care workers are what they are called. If we can improve on that and find ways to continue to keep Nunavummiut home, I believe it is what we would be looking at, if I understood your question correctly. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Mr. Savikataaq.

Mr. Savikataaq: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I know all of us support bringing our elders back home to Nunavut, but we have to make sure that they have a proper place that can take care of them for them to come home to and that roadmap is being mapped out through the Turaaqtavut mandate. I think all of us here support the elders coming back to Nunavut, so that's a simple and easy question to answer. Yes, of course, I support the elders coming back, but with proper care. Turaaqtavut will be the roadmap on how that care for the elders to bring back to Nunavut will be done. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Election for a Cabinet Position

Chairman: Thank you. Are there any more questions for the candidates? Seeing none, there being no more questions for the candidates, we will now proceed to balloting.

Members should fill out their ballots at their seats. After filling out the ballots, please deposit them in the ballot box.

Thank you. The ballots will now be taken to a secure area in the precinct for

counting. Members may wish to wait in the lounge while we take a brief recess. Thank you.

>>*Meeting recessed at 15:00 and resumed at 15:08*

Chairman: The forum has reconvened and I wish to advise members that Member Simailak has been chosen to serve on the Executive Council of Nunavut.

>>*Applause*

The appropriate motion will be moved in the House this afternoon to formally confirm the selection by way of motion.

I will now ask for a motion to destroy the ballots. George, with the motion, Mr. Hickes.

Mr. Hickes: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I move that the ballots be destroyed. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Mr. Malliki, second? Thank you. The ballots will be destroyed. I will now invite Minister-designate, Mr. Simailak, to make a brief remark. Mr. Simailak.

Mr. Simailak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you, colleagues. This is all very surreal. It has been a privilege being an MLA and I will be using what I have learned since I became MLA going forward as a minister serving Nunavummiut, and I appreciate the times I have spent with Mr. Savikataaq since I became MLA. I have learned a lot from him and I will continue to use those things I have learned from him. Mr. Malliki, I thank you for trying as well. You and I have had many chats

since we became MLAs, and from you as well, I have learned about our needs.

I mentioned this in my speech that Nunavut is spread out, but it's quite small and we have many wants and needs, and I look forward to try to make life better for Nunavummiut in a collaborative way. It's going to be a very interesting three and a half years, I guess, of what's left of our term. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

>>*Applause*

Chairman: Thank you, Mr. Simailak, and congratulations.

I remind all members that the House will reconvene at 3:45 p.m. The Nunavut Leadership Forum stands adjourned.

>>*Meeting adjourned at 15:11*

