

Nunavut Canada

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF NUNAVUT

Nunavut Leadership Forum:

Election of One Minister

Thursday, November 5, 2026

Table of Contents

Opening Prayer 1

Adoption of Agenda 1

Nominations for Cabinet Position 1

Election for Cabinet Positions 12

Iqaluit, Nunavut
November 5, 2026

Members Present:

Hon. Gwen Healey Akearok, Hon. David Akeeagok, Ms. Hanna Angootealuk, Mr. Edward Attagutaluk, Hon. Janet Pitsiulaaq Brewster, Hon. George Hickes, Mr. Jason Iqaluq, Hon. David Joanasie, Mr. Jamie Kablutsiak, Mr. Gordon Kautuk, Mr. Brian Koonoo, Mr. Simon Kuliktana, Hon. Cecile Nelvana Lyall, Hon. John Main, Mr. Johnny Mike, Mr. Fred Pedersen, Mr. David Porter, Mr. Abraham Qammaniq, Hon. Craig Simailak, Mr. Steven Taqtu, Hon. Annie Tattuinee

>> House Commenced at 9:03.

Opening Prayer

Speaker (interpretation): Good morning, Nunavummiut and others watching, listening by way of TV, social media. This morning's meeting before we proceed, Mr. Akeeagok, open the meeting with a prayer.

>>Prayer

Adoption of Agenda

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Akeeagok. This morning our agenda, we'll be voting in a new Minister. Before we proceed, I'll be opening nominations. Anyone who is nominated may say yes or no at that moment. That will be our procedure.

Anyone who is nominated will be able to give a five-minute speech, and afterwards any of the nominees may be asked by any MLA, and each MLA may have only one chance to ask a question. So, I open nominations for the ministership. Mr. Porter.

Nominations for Cabinet Positions

Mr. Porter: Good morning all. I nominate the Member for Kugluktuk, Mr. Kuliktana. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Mr. Kuliktana.

Mr. Kuliktana: No, I decline.

Speaker: Thank you. You may be seated this morning as we go through this. Mr. Mike.

Mr. Mike: Thank you, good morning. I nominate Jamie.

Speaker (interpretation): Mr. Kablutsiak, yes or no?

Mr. Kablutsiak: Yes, I accept.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. Mr. Pedersen.

Mr. Pedersen: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I nominate the member for Quttiktuq, Mr. Steven Taqtu.

Speaker: Mr. Taqtu, yes or no?

Mr. Taqtu: Good morning. Yes, I accept. Thank you.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. Mr. Kuliktana.

Mr. Kuliktana: Good morning. I nominate the member for Iqalukuuttiaq, Fred Pedersen.

Speaker: (interpretation) Mr. Pedersen, you accept?

Mr. Pedersen: I accept.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. Mr. Attagutaluk.

Mr. Attagutaluk: Thank you. I nominate Hudson Bay, Jason Iqaluq.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. Mr. Iqaluq, do you accept?

Mr. Iqaluq: Good morning. No, I don't.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. I don't believe we have any more nominations.

We have three individuals nominated. So, I close nominations and the names mentioned, the nominations: Arviat South, Jamie Kablutsiak; Quttiktuq MLA, Mr. Steven Taqtu; and Cambridge Bay MLA, Fred Pedersen.

As per the list, I'll ask each nominee to give their speech for five minutes. First, we start off with Jamie Kablutsiak.

Mr. Kablutsiak (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. (interpretation ends) I am honoured to stand before my colleagues today as the candidate for Cabinet. I am proud to

represent the people of Arviat South, and I recognize the responsibility that comes with serving not only my constituency, but all Nunavummiut.

Throughout my career, I have had the opportunity to serve my community in different capacities, including education, municipal government and community organizations. Since being elected to the Legislative Assembly, I have also had the privilege of serving as Chair of the Legislation Committee and Co-Chair of Committee of the Whole.

These responsibilities have given me valuable experience working with fellow members, listening to different perspectives, and understanding the importance of cooperation, accountability and respect within our consensus government system.

Mr. Speaker, we know that our communities face many challenges. Families are struggling with the cost of living. Too many Nunavummiut are waiting for adequate housing. We need better access to healthcare, mental health supports, education, training and employment opportunities.

We must also ensure that our Elders are cared for, our young people have opportunities to succeed, and our language and culture continue to thrive. These challenges require all of us to work together.

The 7th Legislative Assembly has established its mandate, *Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit*, which provides direction for our government. It's four pillars focus on strengthening families and communities, supporting economic growth and employment, improving government operations and partnerships, and investing in a brighter future for Nunavummiut.

I support these priorities, but our responsibilities does not end with developing plans and strategies. We must work to ensure that our commitments lead to meaningful improvements in the lives of Nunavummiut.

If I am given the opportunity to serve in Cabinet, I will bring three important commitments to this responsibility. First, I will work hard for the betterment of Nunavummiut. I understand that serving in Cabinet requires dedication, preparation and a willingness to take on difficult responsibilities.

Our communities expect us to work hard on their behalf, and rightly so. I will approach my responsibilities with that understanding and do my part to ensure that government programs and services respond to the needs of our people.

Second, I am committed to helping our government make decisions that are in the best interest of Nunavut. Cabinet members have responsibilities to look beyond our individual constituencies and consider the needs of the entire territory.

Each of our 25 communities has its own challenges and priorities. We must listen to those concerns and consider them carefully when making decisions. I believe we make better decisions when we work together, respect different perspectives and remain focused on what is best for Nunavummiut.

Third, I believe in transparency and accountability. Regular members have an important responsibility to represent their constituents and hold government accountable. If elected to Cabinet, I will work to ensure that members receive clear, timely and accessible information about matters within my responsibilities. I will listen to questions and concerns, provide answers to the best of my ability, and follow up when additional information is required. I believe that open communication and mutual respect are essential to making consensus government work. I also recognize the importance of working closely with Inuit organizations, municipalities and our other partners.

The Government of Nunavut cannot address every challenge on its own. We must build on knowledge and experience of our communities to work and work together towards shared goals.

I am comfortable communicating in both Inuktitut and English, and I value the importance of ensuring that people can express their concerns and participate in discussions in their own language.

If elected to Cabinet I will work hard to remain committed to the --

Speaker: Mr. Kablutsiak, your five minutes is over. Per my list, Cambridge Bay MLA, Mr. Pedersen. You have five minutes.

Mr. Pedersen: Thank you, family and friends watching online and on television. I thank the member for Kugluktuk, Mr. Simon Kuliktana, for nominating me. I believe I'm a good candidate to move up to the second floor of this precinct. My experience at boards and my work history have given me good skills to listen, discuss with others, evaluate options and to make informed decisions.

I'm always monitoring the news, not only here in Nunavut, but also with our neighbouring jurisdictions and at the federal level. This allows me to keep abreast with current events that can affect us.

Let me give you a bit of information on my background, education and work experience. I am an Inuit beneficiary of the Nunavut Agreement. I was born in Maniitsoq, Greenland, and have lived in the North for my whole life, except for educational purposes. I am blessed to have six children, 11 grandchildren and two great grandchildren, and I'm happily married to my wife, Clara.

I went through the grade school education system in Kugluktuk, Nuuk, Yellowknife and Edmonton, where I completed my high school. I completed my college education at Aurora College in Fort Smith, where I earned a diploma in Public and Business Administration.

I have worked for both the governments of the NWT and Nunavut. Jobs I've held during those tenures were in Economic Development, Municipal Affairs and Housing. I have also worked for 23 years with the Kitikmeot Inuit Association where I worked my way up the ladder from entry-level positions to finishing in the role of Executive Director.

I have been elected to sit on Hamlet Council, where I was selected by councillors to chair the Economic Development Committee.

I was appointed by the federal government to the Nunavut Arbitration Board. During that appointment, I was selected as chair by the other appointed members.

I have volunteered my time for spring festivals in both Kugluktuk and Cambridge Bay, and I volunteered my time with the Cambridge Bay Voulenteer Fire Department, where I served for 20 years.

I'm an avid outdoors person that enjoys spending time out on the land or at our cabin spending time with family and friends.

Since my humbling election to be the Member for the Cambridge Bay riding in this Legislature in 2025, I have done my best to represent my community by asking questions in committees and during sessions. Some questions have been relatively easy to ask, while others have been more controversial. However, I have asked them as they were important to my constituents. I don't shy away when tough situations require sound decisions.

You, my peers, have selected me as your deputy speaker. That role includes being the Chair of the Committee of the Whole, as well as a member of the Management and Services Board.

My fellow regular MLAs have selected me as Chair of the Standing Committee on Oversight of Government Operations and Public Accounts. Under this role, I have chaired meetings, attended conferences and chaired televised hearings.

I am also a member of the Standing Committee on Legislation and the Standing Committee on Community and Economic Development.

As you have just heard, my values are grounded in my family, my community and my territory. Today I am looking for your support to join the Executive Council. If selected, I will again do my best, this time for all of Nunavut for whatever department that our Premier decides.

At the same time and if selected, I will continue to be the MLA for Cambridge Bay. My questions to Ministers won't be during the oral question periods in this House, rather, they will be during one-on-one conversations and with cabinet as a whole.

When I was first elected, I was asked by constituents not to put forward my name for a cabinet position. After the resignation of a cabinet minister, I reached out to constituents and community leaders, and they have now asked me to put my name forward. And just as important, my family is also supportive.

In closing, I thank all of you, my colleagues, in advance for your consideration of me moving up to the second floor and to becoming the newest member of the Executive Council of the 7th Legislative Assembly of Nunavut. *Qujannamiik*.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. And the last nominee, Member for Quttiktuq, Mr. Taqtu.

Mr. Taqtu (interpretation): Thank you. First of all, I would like to say thank you to Mr. Pedersen for nominating me for Minister position. And we've been here at the legislature for a year now, and I've been very proud of the way we started, and when a Minister resigned, we had something else to do. So I thought I'm eligible for this, and my wife, April has supported me, has agreed to this.

I worked for a long time at Mary River. I think that's -- only know about land and stuff, but then not really. And I have volunteered with the Search and Rescue and fire department and other places in our community in my previous community.

On September 16 we moved to Iqaluit. My wife got a job in Iqaluit, and the people who elected me, I'm very grateful to them and I'm trying to help them any way I can, either in the House or anywhere.

I feel I am able to do the job as a Minister if I am elected. If I get elected, I hope I don't get as hot as I get sometimes. And the reason I'm running is because I talk about younger people. I want to make sure that we have leadership for the future to get them interested in running as an MLA or as a Minister.

I know people in the smaller communities can be useful, too. They can start their own things; they just have to use their minds.

I felt I was going to talk longer, but that's all I have to say. Thank you.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. Okay, the nominees just made their speeches to try to become a Minister. Now, all MLAs can ask one question to each of the nominees. The floor is now open for questions. Member for Aivilik, Ms. Angootealuk.

Ms. Angootealuk (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is: What is your position on *Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit*?

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. Following the names of the nominees, I will ask them to respond one at a time. Member for Arviat South, Mr. Kablutsiak.

Mr. Kablutsiak (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In here in the mandate of *Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit,* it states on page 6 (interpretation ends) about Inuit societal values. We value Inuit traditional knowledge and will call on the wisdom of Elders to help us work collaboratively in harmony and balance towards a better future. (interpretation) Thank you.

Speaker: (interpretation) Thank you. Following my list, Member for Cambridge Bay, Mr. Pedersen, your response to the question.

Mr. Pedersen: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you for the question. Although I am not fluent in speaking my language anymore, I do believe in our IQ principles. The principles are grounded in Inuit societal values and help direct how decisions should be made, why they should be made, who should be included in those decisions, and it starts with including our Elders in what we do and what we bring forward, and I support using Inuit societal values within government operations. Thank you.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. Your response to the question, Member for Uqsuqtuuq, Mr. Taqtu.

Mr. Taqtu (interpretation): Thank you. With *Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit*, I think we need to bring it out more. I got adopted by Elders, and I've used *Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit* in my life, and we try to promote Inuktitut, talking in Inuktitut. We need to promote that some more, in my opinion, and to have them more available as curriculum in the schools. Thank you.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you as well. Any questions? Member for Kugluktuk, Mr. Kuliktana.

Mr. Kuliktana: Thank you. My question today for the three candidates: What would you do to ensure potential future graduates, such as the Nunavut Teachers Education Program and the Social Service Program, to have an opportunity to become part of the Nunavut

government workforce? As the past governments did not have a good track record in supporting our past graduates to be potential employees due to not having experience, how would you ensure to our future potential graduates that they will be welcomed to the government workforce? Thank you.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. The first nominee to respond to the question will be the member for Arviat South, Mr. Kablutsiak.

Mr. Kablutsiak (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you to the MLA who asked the question. In Nunavut's education, I was a teacher for more than 20 years, and I consider it very important. And young people who are graduating need to be able to go on, either get a job or go for further education, and I expect that in Nunavut. The university that will be built in Arviat, the Inuit Nunangat University, I know I believe that our young people will benefit a lot from that and will be able to host Inuit from outside of Nunavut as well.

And we need to improve the school system and the teachers of the Nunavut Teacher Education Program. The program should be available in the communities. Like to use myself as an example, I took the NTEP program and graduated in Arviat, and I was able to use that at home, and the University of Regina were able to offer programs in Iqaluit, but then those programs should be available in the communities as well. Thank you.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. Member for Cambridge Bay, Mr. Pedersen.

Mr. Pedersen: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thanks to the member for asking that question. As you know, I've asked questions in this House regarding that topic. Graduates from Nunavut, especially Inuit graduates from Nunavut, I think should be hired in government. I believe in the education system,I know it needs some work, but the courses that are offered at Arctic College are on par and associated with the universities down south.

On the experience part, if a graduate doesn't have all the experience required to fill a position, I think we could use money from the Implementation Contract under Article 23 to have mentors available for those employees, so that if they have trouble in completing some of the tasks of their job, they can learn from the mentor.

I myself started my career with the Government of the NWT as a trainee, and I had a mentor for three years, and that allowed me to, after that three-year period allowed me to become a full-fledged economic development officer for the government, and I think that's a good way to get more Inuit into government positions. Thank you.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. Your response, Member for Quttiktuq, Mr. Taqtu.

Mr. Taqtu (interpretation): Thank you. The programs that teach teachers for the Arctic College, and we always prefer Inuit teachers. And if any of the prospective teachers are in training, I'm saying this to you: we need more Inuktitut teachers. Our students quit sometimes because of the lack of proper teachers.

Education is very important, either in school or somewhere else. I believe it is important and I will promote it. We need more teachers. Thank you.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. Any more questions? There is a question from the Member for Amittuq, Mr. Qammaniq.

Mr. Qammaniq (interpretation): Yes, thank you, Mr. Speaker. We've had Nunavut now for 27 years and when it started, the communities that did not become regional centres were supposed to get more support. It's been 27 years, I haven't seen much support for the non-regional centres. What will you do to try to help the smaller communities? Thank you.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. At this time candidate to respond first, Member for Cambridge Bay, Mr. Pedersen.

Mr. Pedersen: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and I thank the member for asking that question. Decentralization when it was first started included most positions in the regional centres, and also included some government departments in decentralized communities.

It hasn't worked to the fullest extent. Some of those small communities did not attract employees to work in positions that were put in those communities, and I know now that the Government of Nunavut in their new hiring policies allows employees to work in communities outside of where normally the department has all of its employees. So if an employee in a small community such as Kugaaruk wants to work in a department that is located in Cambridge Bay, they can remain in Kugaaruk and work for the department instead of being transferred to that regional centre.

I think if we encourage more employees to do that and more employees want to do that, that we'll see more employment in our smaller communities, as not all members from communities want to move to the larger centres.

So ensuring that we follow that new policy in the government and advertise it widely to employees I think is a way of ensuring greater employment for smaller communities. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. Member for High Arctic, Mr. Taqtu, your response.

Mr. Taqtu (interpretation): Thank you. In the smaller communities, the support in the smaller communities, I have three communities that I represent there in the High Arctic, and they are one of the smallest communities in all of the communities, and we need more employees' positions and for other things. Because there are smaller barriers in many communities or there are more barriers in the many communities, so therefore we have to look for ways how we can fill this or more positions in the communities. Thank you.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you as well. Member for Arviat South, Mr. Kablutsiak.

Mr. Kablutsiak (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I thank the member for his question. Our Nunavut government gets funding from the federal government for 25 communities. The government receives the funding and it's inadequate. And I believe truly that we need to be supportive of each other because of the *Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit* mandate that we have to work with. Nunavut Tunngavik and other entities like, for example KIA, QIA, we need to work with these regional entities to develop the communities. And we need to consider how we can develop them, (interpretation ends) simplify operations and enhance partnerships, collaborate with Nunavut Tunngavik Incorporated, and regional Inuit Associations to accelerate shared priority projects through the Nunavut Partnership Committee and its working groups. *Mat'na*.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. According to the list of names I have, Member for Pangnirtung, Mr. Mike.

Mr. Mike (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Good morning to the people of Nunavut, and as well I would like to congratulate the candidates. I really enjoy being a Minister, and sometimes it's not all that great. And you are being asked questions, and thank you for your responses to our questions.

And my question is, Mr. Chairman, that Nunavut Tunngavik has charged Inuit language rights and language rights within the schools. For that reason, the Nunavut government has now put them in court with NTI for the reason in regards to language rights. And it's part of our rights. As the government, how can the government move forward? What would your position be with the NTIs language issue when they put them to court? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. Member for Quttiktuq, Mr. Taqtu.

Mr. Taqtu (interpretation): Thank you. That issue, Inuktitut language is very important, and I agree with them. I agree with NTI, and they're urging government to use Inuit language more, and they're even going through the courts right now. So we need to encourage and push more for Inuit language in Nunavut. And I agree with NTI that the

government, as government and members of the Legislative Assembly have to encourage and urge more on language services. Thank you.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you as well. Member for Arviat South, Mr. Kablutsiak.

Mr. Kablutsiak (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you, member, for your question. The issue in the past years, this has been dealt with for quite sometime now. It's very difficult to state in detail about this personally myself, as this is an ongoing process at this time. But I believe that we need to support each other through *Ikajuqtigiikta* Mandate (interpretation ends), strengthen and uplift families and communities, invest in community-based programs and support to improve food security, health, mental health and well-being to encourage community life, and work with Elders and other partners and stakeholders to promote, protect and advise on Inuit language, culture and cultural well-being in government programs, services and workplaces.

(interpretation) If elected to the cabinet, we need to implement this through agreement, and I believe we need to do this through agreement. That's my response. Thank you.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. Member for Cambridge Bay, Mr. Pedersen.

Mr. Pedersen: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and I thank the member for the question. First off, I support that Inuit programming should be in our school system. Right now I understand that because of a lack of teachers, it's more difficult to fully implement that system in our schools. So we need to ensure more of our Inuit are trained in teacher education programs and language proficiency programs.

I think we could learn from neighbouring jurisdictions, such as in Greenland. In Greenland, they decided that they would have one dialect for government and schools, and that dialect would be used within government and within the school system. And at the same time it has allowed for all of the other dialects from the smaller communities and the different communities in Greenland to flourish. So, you know, their education system is done in Kalaallisut, and it worked well. And I think we can partner with Nunavut Tunngavik Incorporated on full language immersion programs.

Some of the mining operations that are closing down have excellent infrastructure, and if the cleanup of the mine is done to satisfactory standards, maybe all of that infrastructure doesn't have to be moved; perhaps it can be taken over by either NTI or the government and then we could send families there. A mining camp is like a small community; it has all of the infrastructure required. We could send families there for, you know, periods of time for full immersion Inuktut learning programs. That will allow residents to become more -- use the language more. And once they leave that full immersion camp after a period, then they would be able to speak and write the language on a daily basis, and that would help it be used more and also give us a bigger pool of teachers to come use the

language and would be able to teach in Inuktitut languages in our school system. Thank you.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. Questions? I have no more names on my list. The ballots, we'll be going up to vote and later on we'll let everyone know the results. Thank you.

>>Break 9:46

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. Everyone has finished their ballots. The ballots will be counted in the Legislative Assembly, and the doors will be locked. Once the bell starts ringing -- we'll ring the bells after the (no interpretation).

>>Break 9:50

Election for Cabinet Positions

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you and welcome back. Thank you. There was a 50 percent request required for election to the position, and because of that, the one with the least votes is being removed from the list. Mr. Taqtu has been taken off the list for the ministerial position. And there was a requirement to have a second round, because there's a requirement for 50 plus. We will be putting together the ballots, one for Arviat South, and Mr. Pedersen, member for Cambridge Bay. They will be on the ballots. And while we're taking the time to put it together, we will take a break and the bells will ring once we have been done.

>>Break 10:05.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. We have new ballots that are available. We can do our second round and there are two names on the ballot, Mr. Kablutsiak and Mr. Pedersen. And afterwards we will count the ballots. Thank you.

>>Break 10:19

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. We will be doing a second round of counting of the ballots in a secure room, and we will once again ring the bells when we're done. Thank you.

>>Break 10:23

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you for coming back. The Nunavut Leadership Forum has reconvened. I wish to advise members that Mr. Pedersen, Member for Cambridge

Bay, has been chosen to serve on the Executive Council of Nunavut. Mr. Pedersen, you have the opportunity to say a brief comment. Mr. Pedestrian.

Mr. Pedersen: Thank you, member. Thank you for putting your trust in me to be a new member on Cabinet. I look forward to the new opportunities that will bring, and I look forward to working with Cabinet on helping to resolve the issues we face in Nunavut today.

To constituents in Cambridge Bay, I'll still be your MLA. I'll still bring forward the issues from our community to this government and continue to advocate on your behalf.

And I thank you all again for putting your support in me, and I look forward to the challenge. Thank you.

>>*Applause*

Speaker (interpretation): I congratulate you. The appropriate motion will be moved in the House at the sitting this afternoon. And this afternoon, the swearing in ceremony for the new Mr. Pedersen will be held shortly, after the House adjourns for the day.

I will now ask for a motion to destroy the ballots. Thank you. The ballots will be destroyed.

And again as a reminder, members and viewers at home, that the House sits at 1:30 this afternoon, and that will be the last day. As a reminder again, at 11 o'clock| there will be a full caucus meeting. The forum is adjourned. Thank you.

>> *House adjourned at 10:32*