

LOCAL NEWS

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Fitzgerald's vote brings the house down on the Liberal Opposition **LATEST NEWS**

The Telegram

The speaker spoke and the answer is no. That means the Opposition Liberals will not receive the additional resources they deem they are entitled to — and which a consultant also recommended they get — for staffers and research.

Roger Fitzgerald, Speaker of the House of Assembly, cast his long-awaited vote today on the funding issue that was deadlocked along party lines.

The House of Assembly management commission met this afternoon — a meeting that had been postponed last week because government members were unavailable, officials said, which left the commission short of a quorum.

Earlier this year, the legislature hired an independent consultant to review caucus funding levels. The consultant recommended additional cash for all three parties.

Last month, the Progressive Conservative members of the House of Assembly management commission voted to give themselves the full amount of the consultant's recommendation: an additional \$126,000. The NDP also got the full recommended amount: an extra \$124,000.

Those votes passed unanimously.

But the governing PCs voted to block additional cash aimed at helping the Liberal Opposition hire researchers and caucus support staff. The consultant recommended an extra \$162,000 in funding; the Liberals instead got just \$12,000.

That meant it was up to Fitzgerald — a Conservative who as speaker does not sit in the party's caucus — to break the tie. He did that today, voting down the extra funding for the Liberal Opposition.

Complete story and reaction in Wednesday's Telegram.

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