

**MEETING OF THE GENERAL COUNCIL OF THE JAMAICA TEACHERS’ ASSOCIATION**

**SATURDAY, MARCH 19, 2016 – 10:00 A.M.**

**W.B.C. (Ben) Hawthorne Conference Room – 2nd Floor**

**97B Church Street, Kingston**

SECRETARY GENERAL’S REPORT

1. **INTRODUCATION**

Our usual warm welcome to all members of General Council. Again, I wish to applaud all our volunteers for your commitment and zeal to carry out the work of the Association. As we come together today, we are conscious of that we have a new government in place and that democracy is alive and well in Jamaica. We offer our congratulations to the Most Honourable Andrew Holness and members of his team as they take over the challenging task of running a country. We congratulate Past President, Senator, Honourable Ruel Reid, on his elevation to Minister of Education, Youth and Information. We pledge our loyal support to him and promise to never lose sight of our mission as an Association to promote and defend the education our people. We wish also to acknowledge our Minister of State, Honourable Floyd Green. We offer congratulations to Past President Michael Stewart who is now the Member of Parliament for Southern Manchester. The Jamaica Teachers’ Association is indeed a huge training ground for all kinds of leaders. The fact that we are not sure which of tomorrow’s leaders we are training today, demands of us to ensure that we give all voices a chance to be heard, even when we might disagree.

Today, more than yesterday, requires of us all to play our role in building *Jamaica Land We Love* to live in.

Again, welcome and we look forward to yours contribution.

1. **SALARIES AND CONDITIONS OF SERVICE ISSUES**

The election seemed to have slowed down the progress we were making in bringing some issues to conclusion and, as such, there is not much to report.

1. **50% REFUND**

We believe most of the persons have been paid who were identified for refund by March 2015. We have to rely on feedback from membership because we have not had a meeting since February with the Ministry of Education, Youth and Information.

1. **TERTIARY GRANT**

We received 327 applications for the Tertiary Grant. We have analysed the applications and have submitted then to the Ministry of Education, Youth and Information for a joint selection process to occur. We were hoping this would have happened by March 31, 2016. That date seems a bit illusive right now, but we shall see what happens. Commendations to the Member Services and Industrial Relations Unit for much of the work in this regard.

1. **PAYMENT OF OUTSTANDING TRAVELLING ALLOWANCES**

We are reminded that year two of our Heads of Agreement, which will include the 3% increase on Basic Salary, will take effect on April 1, 2016.

It was announced by the Ministry of Finance that the remaining two months’ arrears should be paid in April 2016. The other outstanding matters will have to be brought to the table very soon or else the perceived benefits will amount to nought.

1. **PENSION REFORM**

There is no further development in this regard because the dissolution of Parliament in effect means that the Bill fell off the Order Paper, hence the proposed April 1, 2016 commencement date for the new Pension Scheme is not on. It follows that, until the law is passed, the status quo remains.

1. J.T.A. FRAUD CASE

We continue to pursue this matter through the Courts and, as we repeatedly state, this is a long and expensive process. Sometimes it appears as if we have made some progress only to be frustrated by other legal gymnastics.

The lawyer has informed that we now have a Registrar’s Caveat lodged and firmly placed against all properties captured by **Formal Orders** obtained against the defendants. This operates to secure our interest in these properties and nullify any attempt to dissipate these assets by the defendants and or their agents.

1. JAMAICA TEACHING COUNCIL BILL

There is no further development in this area.

1. J.T.A. ROLL OF HONOUR

We again offer our highest congratulations and commendation to Mrs. Evelyn Tugwell on her award. She received this award at a ceremony held on February 4, 2016 at the Jamaica Pegasus Hotel. Generally, it was a good function with very good attendance. The West was well represented. We thank Mrs. Spencer-Jarrett and her team members of a good job.

1. PRE-SERVICE FORUM

This activity is one for our student teachers. A useful *sniff* of the Association and what it represents to our future colleagues. This was held on Tuesday, March 1, 2016. We had a good representation from most of the colleagues. Mrs. Karen Kennedy, Retired Principal, Portmore Community College, did an excellent job as Guest Speaker. The truth is, colleagues, that the future looks bright with those youngsters. We commend Mrs. Charmaine Gooden Monteith and her team on a good job.

1. **WOMEN’S CONFERENCE**

A group of women met on Friday, March 11, 2016 for their conference. They were addressed by Miss Gail Hudson, Director of Human Resource and Corporate Services, Ministry of Health. From what I could glean, they had a good day.