



Legislative Assembly of Alberta

The 27th Legislature  
Second Session

Standing Committee  
on  
Community Services

Bill 202, Municipal Government (Municipal Auditor General)  
Amendment Act, 2009

Monday, June 22, 2009  
12:01 p.m.

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**Legislative Assembly of Alberta  
The 27th Legislature  
Second Session**

**Standing Committee on Community Services**

Doerksen, Arno, Strathmore-Brooks (PC), Chair  
Hehr, Kent, Calgary-Buffalo (AL), Deputy Chair

Benito, Carl, Edmonton-Mill Woods (PC)  
Bhardwaj, Naresh, Edmonton-Ellerslie (PC)  
Chase, Harry B., Calgary-Varsity (AL)  
Johnson, Jeff, Athabasca-Redwater (PC)  
Johnston, Art, Calgary-Hays (PC)  
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**Bill 202 Sponsor**

Johnston, Art, Calgary-Hays (PC)

**Department of Municipal Affairs Participant**

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**12:01 p.m.**

**Monday, June 22, 2009**

[Mr. Doerksen in the chair]

**The Chair:** Well, good afternoon, ladies and gentlemen. I'm pleased to welcome you to this meeting of the Standing Committee on Community Services. I'm pleased that you've all been able to attend this afternoon. We are here today to discuss Bill 202, the Municipal Government (Municipal Auditor General) Amendment Act, 2009, that has been referred to this committee. This is the first bill that has been referred to our committee since I've become chair, so I'm pleased that we have an opportunity to deal with this and that other members of the committee have come to attend today.

I know that we will have some people stepping in just a few minutes late, but attending via teleconference we have Harry Chase in Calgary. Is that right, Harry?

**Mr. Hehr:** No. He was questionable the other day, so I'm not sure if Harry is going to be able to make it.

**The Chair:** Okay. That's Kent Hehr, right?

**Mr. Hehr:** Yes, it is. Thank you.

**The Chair:** Deputy Chair, thank you for being in attendance this afternoon. You're here for the duration, are you?

**Mr. Hehr:** Yes, I am.

**The Chair:** Good. Thank you.

We also have Art Johnston in Calgary. Is that right, Art?

**Mr. Johnston:** That's right, Chair. Good afternoon.

**The Chair:** Good to have you on, Art.

At this point I'm going to ask the committee members that are seated at the table to introduce themselves for the record, and then we'll continue. Thomas.

**Mr. Lukaszuk:** Yes. Good morning, everyone. Thomas Lukaszuk, from Edmonton-Castle Downs.

**Mrs. Sarich:** Good afternoon. Janice Sarich, MLA for Edmonton-Decore and parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Education.

**Mr. Bhardwaj:** Naresh Bhardwaj, MLA, Edmonton-Ellerslie.

**The Chair:** Thank you. Welcome to each of you.

Also attending this morning from the Department of Municipal Affairs are Mr. Ray Gilmour, the deputy minister; Mr. Michael Merritt, the assistant deputy minister, local government services division; and Ms Christina Parkins, the manager of financial advisory services, local government services division. Welcome this morning.

We also have some LAO staff at the table. I'll ask you to introduce yourselves. Erin Norton is assisting me here.

**Ms Norton:** Erin Norton, committee clerk.

**The Chair:** Thanks, Erin.

**Mr. Reynolds:** Rob Reynolds, Senior Parliamentary Counsel.

**Dr. Massolin:** Good afternoon. Philip Massolin. I'm the committee research co-ordinator, Legislative Assembly Office.

**Ms Stein:** Rachel Stein, research officer, Legislative Assembly Office.

**Ms Friesacher:** Melanie Friesacher, communications consultant, Legislative Assembly Office.

**The Chair:** Thank you. Welcome all.

Just a few housekeeping matters. As we know, *Hansard* will operate the microphones, so those of us seated at the table do not need to turn them on and off manually. I'd also ask anyone seated at the table to keep BlackBerrys off the table as they interfere with the broadcast system.

With that, we will proceed with the meeting. Have the committee members had an agenda circulated to them? Are there any changes that anyone would like to suggest to the agenda, or can it be accepted as presented?

**Mr. Bhardwaj:** Moved that it be accepted as it is.

**The Chair:** Moved by Naresh Bhardwaj to accept the agenda as printed. All in favour of that, please indicate. That's carried. Thank you.

We have a number of other housekeeping items that we'll just run through rather quickly here but need to be dealt with individually, which are the minutes of previous meetings going back to October 15, 2008. These have been circulated or are on the website, and I do need to deal with these individually.

Could we have a motion to approve the minutes of the October 15, 2008, meeting? Janice Sarich. Thank you, Mrs. Sarich. All in favour, please indicate. Any opposed? For those of you on the line, unless you speak up, I'll assume that you're in favour. Thank you. That's carried.

The second meeting is the April 20, 2009, meeting. Those minutes have also been circulated. Any errors or omissions noted? If not, please, a motion to accept the minutes of the April 20 meeting. Thomas Lukaszuk. Thank you. All in favour, please indicate. Opposed? That's carried. Thank you.

The third meeting, the minutes of the April 21, 2009, meeting of the Standing Committee on Community Services. A motion to accept that. Naresh. Thank you. All in favour? Opposed? That's carried.

The next meeting is April 27, 2009. Moved by Janice Sarich. All in favour? Anyone opposed? That's carried.

The next meeting is April 29, 2009. Moved by Thomas Lukaszuk. All in favour? Anyone opposed? That's carried.

And the May 5, 2009, meeting. Moved by Thomas. All in favour of that? That's carried. Anyone opposed? That's carried as well. Thank you for that.

As you're all aware, Bill 202, the Municipal Government (Municipal Auditor General) Amendment Act, 2009, was referred to the Standing Committee on Community Services on March 16, 2009.

At this point I'll just welcome Jeff Johnson. If you'd just introduce yourself for the record, Jeff.

**Mr. Johnson:** Thank you. I apologize for being tardy. Jeff Johnson, Athabasca-Redwater.

**The Chair:** Thank you, Jeff.

As indicated in my memo to the committee members dated June

15, I have taken the liberty to initiate some preliminary work to expedite the committee's review. This includes the scheduling for this afternoon of a briefing with the sponsor of Bill 202, Mr. Art Johnston, who is also a member of this committee and will provide a technical briefing, and we'll also ask for the department to provide a technical briefing to us at this meeting. I trust that committee members have no objections with that process. I think that it will expedite our discussion of the matter at hand. Any questions or comments on that?

Before we discuss in more detail the work that has been completed and is still required for the committee, I'd like to turn the floor over to Rob Reynolds, our Senior Parliamentary Counsel, who will give us a briefing on what is involved with the review of a bill that has been considered prior to receiving second reading in the House. I'd like you to clarify some of those details.

**Mr. Reynolds:** Thank you very much, Mr. Chair. As you indicated, I'm Rob Reynolds, Senior Parliamentary Counsel. This is the third summer in which policy field committees have undertaken reviews of bills, so it's becoming a tradition.

I'll just allow you if you want to introduce Ms Notley here.

**The Chair:** Sure. Ms Notley has just stepped in. If you'd introduce yourself for the record, Ms Notley, I'd appreciate that.

**Ms Notley:** Thank you. Rachel Notley, Edmonton-Strathcona.

**The Chair:** Thank you.  
Go ahead.

**Mr. Reynolds:** Thank you very much, Mr. Chair. As you know, Bill 202 was referred to this policy field committee on March 16, 2009, during debate on it. It is a private member's bill, of course, which makes it slightly different than a government bill in the sense that with a government bill you wouldn't necessarily have the sponsor speak to it. I mean, the minister may, but, really, the views on this are the views of the sponsor to the extent that this is not a government bill. In that context, I imagine, is why the Department of Municipal Affairs is here today, not to offer what would be a technical briefing on a government bill but to offer comments with respect to the bill as, if you will, observers but certainly not as drafters of the bill because, as you know, private members' bills are drafted out of the office of the Parliamentary Counsel.

**12:10**

In any event the bill was referred to the committee prior to receiving second reading, which means that the committee has a broader scope of review, if you will, than it would had it passed second reading. Bills that have received second reading and are referred to the committee are usually reported back with specific amendments because at that stage the bill goes immediately to Committee of the Whole. For instance, Bill 52 was a recent example. There were specific amendments that went back.

Now, you can certainly propose specific amendments, but the scope is broader than that because you can report back on your observations on the bill, opinions, and recommendations with respect to the bill in the Assembly. I'm reading out of Standing Order 74.2, which reads:

When a Bill is referred to a Policy Field Committee after first reading, the committee may conduct public hearings on the subject matter of the Bill and report its observations, opinions and recommendations with respect to the Bill to the Assembly.

Essentially, that's the process you're engaged in here.

Now, there has been one other private member's bill that was referred to a committee, which some of you may be familiar with. It was Bill 204, I believe, last year. It dealt with hand-held communication devices. In that instance the committee did rather extensive consultations and in the end recommended that the bill not proceed. That recommendation went back to the Assembly, and I believe that on October 22, 2008, the Assembly concurred in that recommendation, so the bill didn't proceed any further.

In terms of precedents, we don't have a precedent where a private member's bill has come back with recommendations to proceed or observations. Of course, we don't have a lot of precedents to deal with because we only have one private member's bill, so there we are.

Of course, the only other thing I'd like to say, Mr. Chair, is that the process that you are about to engage in is up to the committee. The determinations that you may make with respect to soliciting opinions or advice with respect to the bill or how you wish to proceed is entirely up to the committee, and I understand, Mr. Chair, that the committee will be dealing with a number of those decisions this afternoon.

I really don't have anything else. Typically in the past we've also talked about the immunities, et cetera, that belong to a committee as being a committee of the Assembly, but perhaps we've covered this ground already in this session. If there is any desire or any question that members may have about that, how parliamentary privileges apply with respect to a committee or to witnesses, I'd certainly be more than happy to entertain those, but I don't want to take up your time this afternoon if there is no need to go into it.

So, Mr. Chair, those are my brief comments. Certainly, I'd be more than pleased to entertain questions or if some issues may arise after the committee proceeds in its deliberations.

Thank you very much.

**The Chair:** Thank you, Mr. Reynolds. I will open the floor for any questions that anyone may have for Mr. Reynolds with regard to some of the technicalities of what we're dealing with here today. Anyone have questions? If not, thank you for that. They may come up as we move on.

I'd now like to turn the floor over to Mr. Art Johnston, the MLA for Calgary-Hays and a member of this committee. Mr. Johnston is on the line. As the sponsor of Bill 202 Mr. Johnston will be making a short presentation regarding the bill.

Mr. Johnston, the floor is yours at this point, please.

**Mr. Johnston:** Well, thank you, Chair. I'd also like to thank you for inviting me to present the bill, that being 202, the Municipal Government (Municipal Auditor General) Amendment Act, 2009.

**The Chair:** Mr. Johnston, we're having a little bit of difficulty hearing you clearly. You're kind of breaking in and out. I'm not sure if that's a technical situation. I think it's just a matter of maybe step right up to the phone that you're at if you would, please.

**Mr. Johnston:** Yeah. I can't get much closer, but I'll speak up a bit and try that. I don't think it's technical.

**The Chair:** That's excellent. We can hear you very well now. Thanks.

**Mr. Johnston:** Okay. Good.

Once again, thank you, Chair, for allowing me to present Bill 202. I think most members of the committee are familiar with the bill after our debate in the House, but I'd like to give you a refresher if

that's okay with the chair. Then I will certainly take any questions after that if that's okay, Chair.

**The Chair:** That's excellent. Thank you.

**Mr. Johnston:** Okay. Bill 202 creates the office of the municipal auditor general. Currently the Municipal Government Act requires all municipalities to conduct annual audits, which are submitted to the Minister of Municipal Affairs. Those municipalities typically conduct attest audits, which outline spending, borrowing, and revenues. Attest audits include financial statements along with the auditor's report, that provides an opinion on whether the statements are fairly presented and comply with appropriate accounting principles. My concern is that these audits rarely go into further depth.

With Bill 202 the municipal auditor general would work with municipal auditors to delve a little deeper into audits to make sure that funds are spent as efficiently as possible, and together they would conduct comprehensive auditing, which includes attest audits, compliance audits, and value-for-money audits.

The compliance audits report misuse or mismanagement of public funds or expenditures not authorized by the government whereas the value-for-money audits report cases where public funds have not been spent with due regard to economy or efficiency. They also ensure that there are procedures in place to enable administrators to measure and report on the effectiveness of programs.

Based on these in-depth audits, the municipal auditor general would also make public recommendations on how to increase efficiencies and improve business practices. Making the recommendations public would increase the municipalities' accountability. Municipalities would also have to submit a follow-up report to the Minister of Municipal Affairs to show how they acted on the recommendations.

Under Bill 202 municipal auditors would have to report to the council and the municipal auditor general and to the minister if any improper or unauthorized transactions or noncompliance with this or any other enactment is found during an audit. This transparency and accountability at the municipal level is very important, I feel. We have the federal auditor, and we have, actually, our provincial auditor, as everyone is well aware, and municipalities should be subject to the same standard of accountability, I feel.

I'm very pleased that the bill will receive a thorough analysis by the committee. Again, thank you for taking the time to learn more about it. I'm open for whatever is next, Chair.

**The Chair:** Thank you very much, Mr. Johnston.

I will open the floor at this point for questions for Mr. Johnston. Does anyone on the committee have any questions for Mr. Johnston? Seeing and hearing none, thank you very much, Mr. Johnston.

We'll now move on to the next agenda item. In addition to the sponsor of the bill, I've also invited officials from the Department of Municipal Affairs to attend today's meeting and provide us with some of their comments and input regarding the bill. Again I'd like to welcome Mr. Ray Gilmour, Deputy Minister of Municipal Affairs; Mr. Michael Merritt, the assistant deputy minister responsible for the local government services division; Ms Christina Parkins, manager of financial advisory services of the local government services division; as well as Jody Korchinski, communications director.

Please, Mr. Gilmour.

**Mr. Gilmour:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I, too, will be brief. We were asked to come and present to the committee on a technical

area, and I thought that we could provide the committee with some information about different facets of the reporting and how it works right now under the direction of the Municipal Government Act. I'll cover five areas – the reporting requirements, the auditor appointments, the minister's authority, annual budgets, and financial administration – to give you an idea.

On the reporting requirements there are provisions in the Municipal Government Act which provide a framework for municipal financial matters. As was mentioned earlier, Alberta municipalities must complete and publish annual audited financial statements by May 1 of every year. A signed copy of these statements must also be sent to the Minister of Municipal Affairs.

**12:20**

In terms of auditor appointments these are a council responsibility. The auditor must be independent and a professional accountant. The financial statements must be prepared in accordance with the national accounting standards. The ministry has an oversight role in this component to ensure that financial audits are completed each year by each municipality in Alberta.

The minister's authority as it currently sits may act or intervene in certain instances. The minister may appoint an auditor to audit the books and accounts of a municipality if the minister considers it necessary, the minister may require any matter connected with management, administration, or operations of a municipality to be inspected, and the minister may order an inquiry into the affairs of a municipality or at any time appoint an official administrator to supervise a municipality and its council.

As far as annual budgets go, a municipality must adopt a balanced annual operating and capital budget. They must identify program and policy decisions, which are a council responsibility. There is no requirement for a municipality to submit budget information to the ministry, just their annual report, which is done on an annual basis. The minister may establish a budget for a municipality if a financial deficiency is identified under the MGA. Municipalities must have three-year budgets that are balanced.

Under financial administration currently there is no legislated requirement for municipalities to complete performance audits. Both of the major cities in Alberta have an internal audit function, with responsibility for performance audits, but as mentioned before, it's not a legislated requirement. Additional audit requirements may create capacity issues for some smaller communities. Our two major communities definitely have internal audit services; smaller ones do not.

With that, I'd like to provide you with a brief summary of kind of what's in the Municipal Government Act in terms of the whole audit function at this point in time.

**The Chair:** That's the completion of your report?

**Mr. Gilmour:** Yeah.

**The Chair:** Okay. Thank you.

I would open the floor at this point to the committee members. Any questions or any other areas of clarification that anyone would be seeking? If not, thank you very much. We appreciate your attendance and input here today. I understand that you will be exiting the meeting at this point. We appreciate your attendance and your input. Thank you very much.

**Mr. Gilmour:** Thank you.

**The Chair:** I guess the question that the committee needs to decide

or has as an option is: does the committee wish to invite department officials to attend subsequent meetings of the standing committee, or are we comfortable in simply forwarding questions or clarification as we need it in the future? I would open that as a consideration for the committee. Any comments or discussion with regard to that from committee members?

**Mr. Lukaszuk:** They are always available to us if we have any particular questions in the future to ask of them. As we're dealing with proposed new legislation, which isn't in effect now, the value of all of them physically being here would be questionable. But, definitely, if any issues or concerns arise or questions from particular committee members, I imagine we can always forward them to them. I would move that we excuse them unless we need them.

**The Chair:** Okay. The motion by Mr. Lukaszuk is that we excuse the officials and call on them if we need them. Any comments or questions, discussion around the motion? Please, Ms Notley.

**Ms Notley:** Yeah. I just want to clarify. I think it was clear, but just to be totally clear, we have in the past sometimes had some debate over how much information we can go back to the ministry officials for. That was a very brief overview that we just got. Presumably, when we hear from other stakeholders, we may have other questions, so I just want to be sure that there's no limit to our ability to request additional information from them as we go forward.

**The Chair:** I believe it's within the purview of our ability to ask for clarification on points pertinent to what we're discussing here. Absolutely. I think that's within the purview of what we can do.

Any other comments or questions with regard to the motion? All in favour, please indicate. Opposed? That is carried. Thank you.

Do we still have the people on the line? Mr. Johnston and Mr. Hehr?

**Mr. Johnston:** Art is still here.

**Mr. Hehr:** I'm still here.

**The Chair:** Great. Thank you. When I call for direction from the committee, unless I hear from you, I'll assume that you're concurring with the direction the committee is taking.

**Mr. Johnston:** Yeah. Good, Chair.

**The Chair:** Thank you.

I think one of the reasons that the committee is meeting today is to decide how we want to receive public input with regard to Bill 202, and the question that we ask is: do we want to ask for written submissions, or do we want to ask stakeholders for oral submissions to our committee? What is the wish of the committee with regard to receiving the stakeholder and public input on this issue? I'd open the floor for comments from the committee.

**Ms Notley:** I would think that there are certain groups that would like the opportunity to be able to be present and to make presentations in person. That's what the history has been in the past with most of the other committees reviewing bills, so I can't imagine, with the exception of some grand explanation, why we'd do something differently, why we wouldn't do the same in this case.

**The Chair:** I think there's precedent for both written and/or in-

person presentations. That's why the question is being asked. I'm open to direction from the committee with regard to that.

**Mr. Hehr:** Could I be added to the list?

**The Chair:** Yes. That's Mr. Johnston?

**Mr. Hehr:** No. It's Kent Hehr, MLA, Calgary-Buffalo.

**The Chair:** Sorry. I have Mr. Lukaszuk, and then I will come to you, Mr. Hehr. Thank you.

**Mr. Lukaszuk:** Chair, there is a precedent, definitely, for both. On some committees we have taken written submissions, which were quite effective. On some we have allowed individuals to present in person. My only concern with having all stakeholders that may be interested in this topic presenting in person is the fact that direct stakeholders, which have a hundred per cent direct, vested interest in this issue, would be 300 and some municipalities within the province, and all of them or perhaps a large portion of them might be interested in submitting.

Now, the question is: how do we direct them to submit? Most of these groups have the wherewithal – they are municipalities, after all – to compose a written presentation, which would be thorough and would give us an ability to read them thoroughly. I am not sure what the advantage would be in them actually having to appear here now or by teleconference and reading. From experience, Mr. Chair – and I'm not sure if you will agree with me or if committee members will agree with me – usually what happens is that they appear before us and they read to us their written submission. I would be more in favour in this case of having them in writing. They're public documents. They can present them to us. I think that would be sufficient input unless there are some extenuating circumstances where they have to appear in person. I don't know what that would be.

**The Chair:** Okay. Thank you for those comments.

I'll now go to Mr. Hehr, please.

**Mr. Hehr:** Well, thank you very much, Mr. Chair. I appreciate the comments made by Mr. Lukaszuk. I think this legislation primarily is regulating some ways that the municipalities will do business, and I think it's important that we give them both the opportunity to present written and/or oral presentations. Hopefully, they will be able to answer our questions and maybe even add to their written submissions at the time they do their oral presentations. I think there's no time limit on when we need to have Bill 202 implemented, whether we go forward with Bill 202 or not after the discussions with the municipalities, so I think we can and should make the time to meet with individuals if they wish or meet with the municipality groups if they would like to make a presentation. That would be my preference. I have some thoughts on the bill myself, but of course hearing from the groups that will be directly affected is more important than anything I can add to the debate. That would be my preference.

12:30

**The Chair:** Thank you, Mr. Hehr.

**Mr. Johnston:** I'd like to jump in when I can, Arno.

**The Chair:** Okay. I'm going to go to Ms Notley, and then I'll come back to Mr. Johnston.

Ms Notley, please.

**Ms Notley:** Yes. On the point of having had written submissions in the past, I think that giving interested parties the opportunity to present something in person doesn't negate the opportunity for them to provide written submissions. However, it adds to the debate by giving us the opportunity to ask questions and for them to respond on the issues which they become aware are critical to us, so it allows for a much more thorough, wisely considered debate. It seems to me that if the concern we have is that too many people want to come and present, the last way to respond to that is to negate everybody's opportunity to come to present. Then what we need to do is manage the interest in it. But if that's what it is, that's what we're here to find out about, not to sort of say: well, there are so many people that are interested, so we couldn't possibly hear from them. I think that's the exact opposite approach that we want to apply here.

**The Chair:** Okay. Thank you.  
Mr. Johnston, please.

**Mr. Johnston:** Thank you, Chair. I would just add about the written submissions and, however we frame this, presentations in extenuating circumstances: I think it worked fairly well for the bill last year – I forget the number of it – the hand-held cellphone legislation. If I understand correctly, they had written submissions, and some people appeared. I would just be for that. I also am concerned with being overwhelmed with 400-some groups or maybe 300 and others that want to come and appear before the committee. Those are my comments.

**The Chair:** Thank you, Mr. Johnston.  
Mr. Bhardwaj, please.

**Mr. Bhardwaj:** Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. I just want to sort of go with Thomas Lukaszuk. I think written submissions are just fine. It's providing ample opportunities for people to express their views, you know, and be able to submit their submissions.

**The Chair:** Okay. We've had discussion on both sides, both perspectives with regard to this. I don't want to limit discussion, but I am looking for direction by way of a motion with regard to how we proceed. If anyone has clear direction by way of a motion, I'd welcome that at this point.

**Ms Notley:** I'd like to move that we proceed by inviting people to provide us with written submissions and to indicate whether they would also like the opportunity to present in person to the committee and that we give notice accordingly.

**The Chair:** Okay. Your motion is that we ask for written submissions with an indication if groups would also like to present orally as well.

**Mr. Lukaszuk:** I have a question on that. Are you going to qualify this in any way? I just had the pleasure of attending the conference of Canadian municipalities recently. Part of my choosing not to have presentations in person is because I know that over the next two months I will probably meet with elected members from municipalities from at least half of the province if not more on either a casual basis or at meetings, conferences, or barbecues, so I will have an earful one way or the other from all of them in that capacity. My question is: would you qualify it? You may not only have municipalities as a whole presenting to you in person, but you can have individual city councillors. I know some are passionate. Some don't agree with the position of their city council, so they would want to have a dissenting opinion heard from individual councillors.

This is a very hotly debated topic. There are some very strong opinions out there, and there are many city councillors that disagree, as I said earlier, with their position as a city council. We may be here, Mr. Chairman, for a long, long time hearing presentations from individual councillors and municipalities and taxpayers' associations and chambers of commerce, you name it. The list will go on and on and on. Is that what you're suggesting?

You know, all these individuals are eloquent individuals. We're not dealing with a group of people who are somehow precluded from being able to present in writing: by mail, e-mail, submitting digital submissions, you name it. I'm convinced that in this case, particularly in this case, where there won't be that much public input – there will be mostly input from elected officials, bureaucracies, and organizations – it would not limit anyone's ability to send us in writing information in one form or another.

**The Chair:** Okay. Thank you for that.  
Mrs. Sarich, you had some comments, I believe.

**Mrs. Sarich:** Yes. I just was wondering if there would be any consideration for making this kind of like a two-step process. The first step would be to call for the written submission and then as a collective committee to take a look at those submissions and give a thorough examination of that and come back as a committee to determine whether or not we'd like to further seek some oral presentations from the stakeholder groups or individuals that we would like to ask questions, to give a more thorough examination, to have a little bit more interaction.

I'm wondering if Ms Notley would consider this as being a two-step process. Let's kick off the process by asking for a written submission, giving us the ability as a committee to come back after those submissions have been received and we give a thorough examination. Then we as a group collectively, if there's an interest in having certain stakeholders come forward to the committee – because I'm hearing what the precedent has been. Certainly, there are lots of standing precedents there and then some other experiences that have been expressed by some of our MLA colleagues. I'm just wondering. In this case, if we are overwhelmed with a lot of written submissions, then at least it gives us a chance to discern what we would like to do next if, in fact, it is oral presentations.

**Mr. Hehr:** Could I be added to the list?

**The Chair:** I'm going to take Ms Notley and then come back to you, Mr. Hehr.

**Ms Notley:** Right. Well, I think that in some ways my motion kind of had that process partially embedded in it although maybe a little bit farther along the road than what you are suggesting, which is simply asking for submissions and requesting that they indicate whether they have a desire to follow that up with oral in person, which I think is sort of the standard way we do it and also gives us an ability, then, to look at how many people, whether we are overwhelmed with the flood that Mr. Lukaszuk thinks we will be or whether, in fact, we are presented with a reasonable number of groups to hear. If it's the former situation, well, then we can sit down and review, you know, as a committee, as is well within our authority, and consider who we want to hear from and who we don't. But why advertise twice? That's sort of what I had anticipated happening, and that's why I framed the motion that way.

**The Chair:** Mr. Hehr and then Mr. Lukaszuk.

**Mr. Hehr:** Well, thank you very much, Mr. Chair. I really appreciated Mrs. Sarich's sort of clarification of the motion, and I hear Ms Notley's presentation adding that that would be the process almost anyway, but if we could form the motion to sort of indicate that if they indicate that they will be willing to do an oral presentation at the committee's asking them to, if we could put that into the motion, that would be great.

If Mr. Lukaszuk is correct and we are flooded with requests from 300 different organizations, he's right. We are going to have a great difficulty being able to get through this legislation. But with Mrs. Sarich's and Ms Notley's sort of combined, I guess, motion we could then hear from groups that are similar and maybe get to the bottom of things a little quicker.

I appreciate the sentiment of trying to clarify the motion. Thank you very much.

12:40

**The Chair:** Thank you, Mr. Hehr.

Mr. Lukaszuk, I think you were next.

**Mr. Lukaszuk:** Great. Well, I think we have a solution, then, Mr. Chair. If we ask them first to present in writing and to then indicate in a noncommittal manner in their presentation that if asked to present in person at a future time, they would be interested in doing so, that's great because then we'll know who at least is interested in presenting in person. Then we can make that later decision on whether we invite them, indeed, or not. Is that what you meant, Ms Notley?

**Ms Notley:** Yeah. In essence, just indicating whether they have a desire to present in person.

**Mr. Lukaszuk:** Good.

**The Chair:** Okay. Very clearly, asking for written submissions and indicating a desire to make an oral presentation if asked but with no commitment to that: I think that's what I understand the motion to be.

Any other comments, or are we ready for the question?

**Mr. Bhardwaj:** Could you read that motion one more time?

**The Chair:** Do we have the motion recorded?

**Ms Notley:** Do you want me to run it by again?

**The Chair:** Please.

**Ms Notley:** Okay. I was moving – now, how did I put this? – that we publish a notice inviting interested parties to make written submissions within which they would also indicate whether they would prefer an opportunity to supplement those with in-person submissions.

**The Chair:** If asked.

**Ms Notley:** If asked. Right. Okay. Fine. Whatever.

**Mr. Reynolds:** Sorry. I thought that the original motion – perhaps I was mistaken because I didn't write it down – was that the committee request written submissions and ask people to indicate whether they'd like to make oral presentations. That was the motion as I understood it.

**Mr. Bhardwaj:** That was the original motion, but we just added: if asked.

**Mr. Reynolds:** I didn't hear that in your . . .

**Ms Notley:** It wasn't in mine, but I'm prepared to – you know, I will grant you that the original intention of mine was not to . . .

**Mr. Reynolds:** I just wanted to make it clear. Sorry, Mr. Chair.

**The Chair:** I think that in any case it's their desire. I mean, the motion, as I understand it, asks

for written submissions with an indication of whether or not groups would prefer an opportunity to make an oral presentation.

I think, regardless of how that's worded, it is the committee's purview whether or not we proceed with an option for oral presentation. That's clearly – clearly – the purview of this committee. We are not offering anyone an opportunity for an oral presentation in this indication or subsequent to this motion as I understand it.

**Ms Notley:** But we're getting an indication of what the interest is out there, which I think is a worthwhile exercise.

**The Chair:** That's true.

All in favour of that motion, please indicate. Anyone opposed? Anyone on the line opposed? That's carried, I believe, unanimously, or without opposition, by the committee. That's good. Okay. Thank you.

There has been a draft stakeholder list circulated to the committee, posted on the website. I think two questions relate to that. How do we want to advertise with regard to notifying the public of our interest in having written submissions, and are there any names that need to be added to or taken from the stakeholder list? How does the committee feel with regard to the stakeholder list? Are there any interested parties or stakeholders that have not been included there that you're aware of?

**Ms Notley:** I guess I would want to know a great deal more about how we came to this particular stakeholder list because, as was indicated by Mr. Lukaszuk, there are roughly 350 people that aren't included on this list. I'm not sure who put it together, but I'm wondering if I could get a bit of background on how we came up with that list.

**Dr. Massolin:** Yes. Certainly, Mr. Chair, we can explain to the committee the rationale, and for that, I'll defer to Ms Stein, on my right.

**Ms Stein:** I guess that to start, I can just address generally how we picked the municipalities. Since there are quite a few in Alberta, we chose the ones that had a population of at least 50,000. In the sense that we didn't know whether the committee would want to survey all of those municipalities or do a general survey of them, we decided to do a cut-off just based strictly on population.

As for the remainder of the list, we just tried to pick associations that represented the municipalities as well as other potentially applicable stakeholders like auditors, accountants. We also tried to find an academic representative and then the urban municipality associations as well. So it was just more of a general survey that we tried to come up with.

**The Chair:** Okay.

Do you have a further question?



**Ms Notley:** I do if that's okay.

**The Chair:** I'll take that now, sure.

**Ms Notley:** I guess my concern is that in the very brief presentation that we got from the ministry officials, they talked about, for instance, the issue of capacity being a major concern for some municipalities. I'm a little concerned that by just having that 50,000 cut-off, we inadvertently exclude groups that might have one of the bigger objections or concerns raised about this piece of legislation.

**The Chair:** Okay. Thank you.

I'll go to Mrs. Sarich, then Mr. Lukaszuk, then Mr. Bhardwaj.

**Mrs. Sarich:** Thank you very much, Mr. Chair. I'd like to look at the stakeholder list as serving as a guide. I'm very interested in the communications strategy. Having us as a collective committee approving the motion on what approach we're going to use to kind of kick off this process – and we're going to advertise – I think that when I look at the stakeholder list, it serves as a guide for the communications strategy. Perhaps some of the stakeholders have their own newspaper or some sort of publication that would be very appropriate for an ad to be placed about learning more about how to participate in responding to the bill that this committee is looking at, Bill 202.

Not to jump too far into the process here and our decisions, but I'm wondering if others on the committee look at the stakeholder list as just serving as a guide. I'm quite confident that there could be many more stakeholders added to the list. Maybe what we should be leaning towards is to have a discussion on the advertising and communications and to see what the plan is for that, to see if we're really reaching out right across Alberta.

Those would be my thoughts at this time, Mr. Chair. Thank you.

**The Chair:** Thank you, Mrs. Sarich.

Mr. Lukaszuk, please.

**Mr. Lukaszuk:** Thank you. On the list of stakeholders I see AAMD and C, the AUMA, and then the Federation of Canadian Municipalities. They normally have a good process of communication with their membership, so I'm sure that will aid us, but we shouldn't have to rely on that. Mr. Chairman, if we are going to place ads in publications throughout the province, not only in the major cities but also throughout rural Alberta, I think that should assure us that any and all municipalities will have been sufficiently informed. The only other option I see is obtaining a mailing list for all the municipalities and sending them a direct letter. But if we do a public broadcast via newspapers, I think that should suffice.

12:50

**The Chair:** Okay. Thank you.

**Mr. Bhardwaj:** Just actually going along the same lines, in addition to the stakeholders list provided to us, if we were to advertise in their newsletters as well as community newsletters, I think that should send the message out.

**The Chair:** I think those are fair comments that I've heard from a number of committee members, that in fact the discretion we need to exercise with regard to the stakeholders list is determined by how we're going to advertise or invite submissions to the committee. I think that if we have a public advertisement that is accessible across the province, then in fact, you know, the stakeholders list that was

circulated is draft and does not need to be acted upon in any way, really, depending on how we want to notify the public about an invitation to present to the committee. Maybe that's a question that we should consider first of all. If it's a public advertisement, then I think it covers the whole province, and in fact this stakeholders list serves as a guide for general parties that we believe would be interested.

Who has direction for us with regard to that? Do we want to do public advertisements inviting input to the committee? Would someone so move? Mr. Lukaszuk. Any further discussion about the advertising?

**Ms Notley:** I just want to clarify. In terms of the list of stakeholders being developed, what was the intention of that list? I'm sure you guys already had an advertising strategy sort of in your mind as well. Was there a different intention for the stakeholders list? I just want to be sure that we can meet all our objectives in terms of how we define the advertising strategy even if we're not a hundred per cent comfortable with the stakeholders list as being comprehensive right now.

**Ms Friesacher:** I can answer. I think the advertising strategy will be based on whether or not you want public input or just stakeholder input, so we'll tailor it towards that. If you're going to advertise, you're opening this up to the public, so then you're also inviting public submissions. It wouldn't just be limited to the municipalities or associations, but the public would be aware of it. So whether or not you want to receive input from the public. Again, do you want those made public? Do you want written/oral submissions from members of the public? That was a question that we need answered to tailor it to your needs.

**Ms Notley:** Okay.

**Mrs. Sarich:** Mr. Chairman, with all due respect, by virtue of the bill coming to the House, it is in the public purview already. Please don't take exception to my comments, but I understand what the initial developmental thinking was around this, and I think we could stretch a bit here and use, as I mentioned earlier – and the chair has supported that direction – the stakeholder list as a guide. We're going to, I think, lean in the direction of advertising out there in publications, newsletters that typically stakeholders may have available to them to inform their people. For example, even if we were to stretch to include the *Calgary Herald* or the *Edmonton Journal* or the *Edmonton Examiner*, the public would learn very quickly about this, and it's affording them an opportunity to come forward to the committee and provide a written submission should they choose. It's open to everyone here in Alberta, Mr. Chair.

Thank you.

**The Chair:** Okay. Thank you.

Mr. Reynolds, did you want to make a comment?

**Mr. Reynolds:** Just a brief point of clarification here. Just to take what Melanie has said, I think that perhaps there may be – I wouldn't necessarily say confusion, but I think she may have been addressing other issues that we may come to in the sense that, as Mrs. Sarich pointed out, of course, there's no desire to make it anything other than public. I mean, it's in the Assembly; it's been referred to the committee. I'm sure members would agree that if someone wants to write in or say something or express their views to you, there's absolutely no prohibition. I dare say that the committee wouldn't want there to be any prohibition, of course, because you're members, and you all love hearing from the public.

I think that perhaps what Melanie was meaning was that it was just the avenue you choose to solicit that public opinion. I mean, there are a few options with respect to that. Of course, you have the stakeholders list, and that would be a discussion by the committee as to how much public interest you think might be out there and the avenues by which you may want to solicit that. I think that that's really where Melanie was going.

Thank you for allowing me that intervention, Mr. Chair.

**The Chair:** Thank you, Mr. Reynolds.

We'll go back to Mr. Lukaszuk, please.

**Mr. Lukaszuk:** Again, I think we have an answer. Mr. Chair, if you draft a list of stakeholders, fine. It's a good list, by the way. I don't think I would come up with any more stakeholders than they have. However, every time you have a list of stakeholders, you're bound to miss one, and the one you miss is the one that really had valuable input, who wanted to present to you, and we will reach a wrong decision unless we hear from that one particular stakeholder. You know how it works. I have no issue with sending all of these stakeholders a written notice letting them know what we're doing and inviting them. However, just to not miss that one stakeholder, I would place ads in local papers so that for any and all public members who aren't elected city councillors, if they have input that they deem valuable, they also have a chance to share it with us.

**The Chair:** Thank you, Mr. Lukaszuk.

I think there are two matters on the table here. One is whether we send a specific written notification to any groups notifying them of our interest in their input but also the matter of how we speak to the public and the general population on that. Sensing from the committee that, in fact, we do want to advertise our interest in groups' and individuals' input, I'm going to ask for a motion from the committee that would authorize the chair and the deputy chair to approve the advertisement for public input as presented on behalf of the committee regarding the review of Bill 202 simply so that we can go ahead and advertise, short of drafting an advertisement at the meeting today, so that the chair and the deputy chair can circulate an advertisement.

Ms Notley.

**Ms Notley:** Right. I have unfortunately been involved in a few committee discussions where we certainly haven't drafted the advertisement although it has gotten perilously close, but we have had quite a debate on the scope of the advertising: where it's going, what newspapers it's going into, how often, how frequently, what the budget is. I think that is actually something that I would want to have some conversation about here as opposed to simply delegating that to the chair because you're going to have a significant difference in terms of your advertisement in that regard. I can't really support the motion as it's currently stated because I think that typically we get a report or a proposal that outlines: here's the budget; here's what it would cost us to put it into these types of newspapers and that kind of thing.

As I've said before, I'm a little concerned right now because I've heard – and I can't remember if I heard it from Mrs. Sarich, but I thought I sort of heard it as well from some of the staff – that the stakeholder list will sort of drive our advertising campaign a little bit, but maybe not. That was the concern I had because the stakeholder list right now is still a very urban-based stakeholder list. I think we're all on the same page, that we want to have advertising in local newspapers and all that kind of stuff, but I think we have to have that clarified.

**The Chair:** Thank you. I'm pleased to accept that report. I think, Melanie, that you have a report for us in that direction with regard to a proposed advertising budget and how we approach that. I, in fact, have not accepted a motion at this point either. I did talk about being interested in receiving one but didn't actually acknowledge anyone with that motion. At this point I will ask for the report on a potential advertising budget and broadcast list.

1:00

**Ms Friesacher:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Essentially, to reach all Albertans, we can run an advertisement. I would suggest a five and a half by five and a half black-and-white ad that will go in 98 weekly publications, which will reach over 700,000 Albertans, and that cost is approximately \$23,000. In addition, we can run it in the daily, the approximate same-sized ad, running in all nine Alberta dailies, which will cost \$6,500.

As well as advertising, I'd also recommend that we approve the distribution of a news release indicating that we are looking at public submissions, that the committee is inviting the public to provide written submissions, as well as providing an outline of the committee's mandate and membership and purpose. Essentially, what we'll need for that, again, is a timeline for written submissions.

As we've experienced in the past, there have been some issues around making them public, so we also will indicate on the advertisement that submissions will be made public unless people notify us that they don't want it made public, in which case we actually just remove identifying information. That's been the past experience.

So there are some options.

**The Chair:** Comments or questions with regard to this?

**Ms Notley:** That \$20,000 figure: was that running it for one week in the weeklies?

**Ms Friesacher:** In 98 weeklies. Correct. It's \$23,000 approximately.

**Ms Notley:** Right. I was just wondering if you'd run it one week, two weeks, three weeks depending on . . .

**Ms Friesacher:** We run it one week, and we run it all across Alberta. We pick the weeklies with the highest circulation in each region.

**Ms Notley:** Then the same thing in the daily. It would run for one day?

**Ms Friesacher:** Once, yes. We, again, pick the highest running dates, so the high circulations.

**The Chair:** Okay. Any further comments or questions or direction with regard to the budget and the procedure laid out with regard to advertisements?

**Mrs. Sarich:** I just had a question for clarification. This was on one of the comments by Ms Notley and concern around the stakeholder list identified in communities of 50,000 or more. Now that we have received some information around the news release, the weeklies and dailies – and those are all bonafide approaches – I'm just wondering if Ms Notley has any other comments that she would like to share in terms of the weeklies versus the dailies and the budget around that because she had raised a concern about a little bit too urban on the initial stakeholder list and the 50,000. Are you leaning

in the direction, for example, of more weeklies, or would you be satisfied with dailies? Or any other committee member's comments: I'd be interested in that discussion.

**The Chair:** Any comments?

**Ms Notley:** Well, I think the proposal to put it in the 98 weeklies addresses the majority of my concern because if it's in the weeklies, then it's going to get out there to the rural groups. That's my point, assuming that the weeklies are primarily rural.

**Ms Friesacher:** Yes.

**Ms Notley:** Right. Yeah.

**Mr. Lukaszuk:** I would move that we place it in the weeklies because that's the toughest market to reach. So I move that we place a prescribed ad in all the weekly newspapers identified by the research department, including the dailies, and also issue a press release to all media advising of the work of this committee.

**The Chair:** Okay. Is that understood by everyone? Basically, the motion supports the presentation with regard to advertising to the public. Any further comments or questions with regard to that? All in favour, please indicate. Opposed? That's carried. Thank you.

**Ms Notley:** I think we still had to make some decisions about timelines and that kind of stuff, right?

**Ms Friesacher:** Yeah, when the deadline is for applications.

**The Chair:** Yeah. Absolutely. We've got to deal with the deadline. I'll maybe ask staff with regard to what's needed following written submissions or following response. What's a workable timeline for this from your perspective?

**Dr. Massolin:** Well, Mr. Chair, I can speak to that. We would need, ideally, about a week just to summarize the submissions and make that available for the committee, so a week after the deadline and then the following meeting date. You know, if the committee wants us to summarize the submissions, that's what we'd need.

**Mrs. Sarich:** Just a question for clarification because there was a comment made that if we went with the weeklies approach, then you would be trying to hit the highest circulation dates. That impacts a submission deadline date. So I'm just wondering: with that knowledge of what you have in your experience, does five weeks from now or six weeks from now as a deadline make sense with the criteria that you're working in or something like that? Then, I guess, the question would be to you, Mr. Chairman: if that's acceptable in that regard, then what date, approximately, would we be looking at as the deadline for the submissions, or do you have a sense of that?

**The Chair:** Say, five, six weeks, end of July would be a time frame that would work. Is that close to a workable time frame?

**Ms Friesacher:** Absolutely. We can put it out the first week of July and then have the end of July as a submission date.

**The Chair:** Okay. July 31: I don't know what day that is.

**Ms Friesacher:** Yeah. Essentially, what we'll do for the dailies – again, as you mentioned, highest circulation is a weekend run, and

then the following week we'll run the weeklies throughout the week. So it will give us plenty of time.

**The Chair:** Okay. July 31: what day is that? I'm not even sure.

**Dr. Massolin:** It's a Friday.

**The Chair:** That's a Friday? That's a convenient closing date. If the committee is favourable to that, I'd ask for a motion with regard to

the closing date being July 31.

Moved by Ms Sarich. All in favour, please indicate. Opposed? That's carried.

Now, anything else that we need with regard to communication? There was some discussion with regard to whether we needed to send a letter inviting specific groups to submit. I think, given the discussions we've had, there's reason to believe that most of the interested parties will understand they're invited to submit based on the public nature both of our discussion around the bill and the advertising that has taken place, and that will suffice unless there's direction from the committee to do more; i.e., send a letter to specific groups.

**Mr. Johnson:** I might suggest we do send letters out to the stakeholders as provided but also all the municipalities. The small rural municipalities sometimes miss these things in the paper and even miss some of their bulletins that come out from AUMA or AAMDs and Cs. I sure saw that recently with my private member's bill. Even though I worked with the associations to get bulletins out to all the municipalities, there were many that didn't get that notice. It's not that much work to send a letter to 300 and some municipalities. Let's do it.

**The Chair:** Is that a motion?

**Mr. Johnson:** That's a motion, yeah.

**The Chair:** Any further discussion with regard to that? So you included in that motion the stakeholders list as it is as well as all of the municipalities.

**Ms Notley:** Well, if you're sort of playing with the motion, I'd actually like to add additional postsecondary institutions. You mentioned the U of C School of Public Policy, and I think there's an equivalent at U of A and probably U of Lethbridge – well, at least those other two. I'd like to see a bit of a broadening within the academic community to make sure that that community is fully aware of it.

**1:10**

**The Chair:** Okay. I'm going to take that in just a minute as we deal with the stakeholders list. Okay? I think we'll deal with the motion to, in fact

send a letter to the stakeholders list as well as the municipalities followed by a discussion around how broad that stakeholders list needs to be.

Any further discussion with regard to the motion? All in favour of the motion, please indicate. Opposed? That's carried. Thank you.

Now back to the stakeholders list. You've suggested we add other policy groups of other universities in the province.

**Ms Notley:** Right.

**The Chair:** Okay. Any others?

**Dr. Massolin:** Mr. Chair, if I may just speak to that point, we're aware of other academics that deal with municipal affairs and that area, but we're not necessarily aware of schools of public policy studies like at the University of Calgary. We can certainly look into, you know, the U of A, U of L equivalents in terms of academics in the field of municipal affairs.

**The Chair:** Okay.

**Mr. Lukaszuk:** Mr. Chairman, I would even hedge on removing that one particular school off the list for the very same reason as I argued before: why would you put one if you are not going to put all? We don't even know who in the world "all" are.

The list of stakeholders, as I see it right now, would be municipal associations, so there are three. They encompass all the municipalities within Alberta. Plus, we will send it to all individual municipalities. Then we have the legal group, which is the Canadian Bar Association. Again, we are not going to send it to every law firm in Alberta. We are just going to send it to the Bar Association, and they can deal with their membership. Then we have the Alberta Chambers of Commerce, and we have included the two large chambers of commerce, Edmonton and Calgary. I think Alberta would have sufficed, but that's fine. Then we have the auditors' association, the Canadian Comprehensive Auditing Foundation, Canadian Council of Legislative Auditors. That takes care of the entire auditing community. Again, we're not going to send it to individual accounting firms in Alberta. We are sending it to the office of the Auditor General. We are sending it to the Institute of Chartered Accountants of Alberta, so the financial side of the profession is taken care of, and the Certified Management Accountants of Alberta and the Canadian Institute of Chartered Accountants and the Government Finance Officers Association. That covers any and all stakeholders who will be directly affected by the bill one way or another.

Now, under 9.0 Academic the University of Calgary School of Public Policy: you know, there are professors or departments within faculties virtually in every postsecondary institution: Calgary, Lethbridge, Athabasca, U of A, so many of them. There are different professors and different schools and different chairs within faculties. Again, you're running into the situation where you're going to miss one.

This will be publicized now in every newspaper in Alberta, and these individuals, these academics who study this stuff probably are subscribers to the internal publications of all these professions that we will be now sending a letter to. How far do we want to go? If the research department can assure me that (a) it won't delay the process and that (b) they will find all of them so we won't have some unhappy professor from the university of I don't know where in charge of some study saying "Well, I wasn't invited, and I have valuable input," then sure, go ahead, but I don't know how you're going to do it.

**The Chair:** Thank you, Mr. Lukaszuk.

**Ms Notley:** I know that Mr. Lukaszuk does hate to bring in research.

**Mr. Lukaszuk:** I just hate to agree with you.

**Ms Notley:** That, too. The two are kind of side by side.

Anyway, I think maybe the better way to approach it would be if you just sent it to the chair of the respective department, so at U of A if there's no public policy, just to the poli sci department, the chair of poli sci at AU, the chair of poli sci at the various – it's probably

a list of about seven or eight. Let them figure it out, and then we'll get that input. If we inadvertently insult someone, then the chair can deal with it.

**The Chair:** That's exactly the point.

**Mr. Lukaszuk:** Sounds like you.

**Ms Notley:** Not this chair. I meant the chair of the department.

**The Chair:** Well, I think we've got quite a list here, and if we can cover the other groups, I'm comfortable with that.

**Mr. Lukaszuk:** Or we invite Ms Notley to on her time pick up a phone and call all these researchers that she knows about that may be interested, because we will miss some.

**The Chair:** Thank you.

**Mrs. Sarich:** Well, I've really enjoyed hearing the various perspectives around this particular issue. I'm just wondering whether or not it's of any value to send out to the presidents of the postsecondary institutions within Alberta and let them discern where that letter should go and the appropriate copies to the colleagues within that postsecondary institution should there be an interest to respond in writing to this committee. So rather than to the chair of a particular department, I would send it to the president of the postsecondary organizations right across Alberta.

**The Chair:** Okay. That's another perspective. I'm comfortable adding a few names to the university list or dropping it altogether. But at this point, Mr. Bhardwaj, if you've got clear direction, I'll take it. Otherwise, we're just adding to the stakeholder list at this point.

**Mr. Bhardwaj:** About clear direction, what I was going to say: we're advertising it. You know, it's public advertisement. It's running in weeklies, dailies. It's all there. You know, trying to send a letter to individual institutions and organizations doesn't really make sense because it's all there. If you miss one, then you've got a problem. This way here it's publicly advertised. If you didn't see it, well, there's only so much we can do in terms of informing people. I mean, we're trying our best through whatever resources we have available.

**The Chair:** Thank you.

**Ms Notley:** My concern is that, really, we've got a long list of people here. I'm pretty sure it will take the push of one button to come up with the chairs of the departments or the presidents – it doesn't really matter – to get that group in there. Yes, we're advertising, but we're talking about advertising in the dailies in the first week of July and advertising once and giving people till July 31 to respond. Let's face it: we're already not in the most easy-to-get-hold-of time for people. That's what the idea of sending letters out is, to make sure that people get notice on the same grounds that we made the decision to send the letter to the 356 municipalities. Now, if we can do that, I think it's not unreasonable to send out six or seven letters to academic institutions based on the same kind of rationale.

**The Chair:** I'm fine with adding those names to the list unless there's by motion a direction to do something other. To the

committee, that works for me if you're comfortable with it. If there are no other names to add to the list, if we're comfortable with the stakeholder list the way it is, I think we should talk just briefly about whether or not there are research requirements for this committee regarding Bill 202.

I'd like to ask Phil Massolin to briefly discuss some research options that he's considered for us.

**Dr. Massolin:** Sure. Thank you, Mr. Chair. I just wanted to take this opportunity to remind the committee that the LAO research staff, as you know, will continue to be available to this committee to provide research in the ongoing review of Bill 202 in addition to finalizing the stakeholders list. As this committee knows, we provide nonpartisan research support for this committee, as we have done for the other policy field committees, and we provide this research for the committee as a whole.

Now, the research service and support we can provide basically is as follows. What we've done in the past is provide a cross-jurisdictional comparison of the proposed legislation under study. We can also provide other research briefings if the committee so directs.

I should mention at this point that press clippings on Bill 202 are already being gathered and being posted on the committee's internal website home page, so committee members can view them there. When we get to the public consultation portion of the Bill 202 review, as mentioned, the research staff can provide a summary of those written submissions and present it to the committee both in a written form and an oral form if that's desired. Subsequent to that, we can also provide a focus issue document on the salient issues on the bill, again if the committee so directs. Finally, Mr. Chair, the LAO research staff can help the committee draft the committee report.

I'll just end there if there are any questions. If not, perhaps I can ask for direction from the committee as to what the committee would like us to do for the next meeting. One possible research item that we can propose is to prepare a cross-jurisdictional comparison of Bill 202.

Thank you.

1:20

**The Chair:** Thank you, Dr. Massolin. We appreciate that very much.

Any questions or comments from the committee? I think there's some good work that could be done here for us, particularly with regard to the cross-jurisdictional survey of how other jurisdictions deal with this matter. Any other comments from the committee? I saw some nods when I suggested that a cross-jurisdictional review would be a good thing, and I'm assuming that that's agreement.

**Dr. Massolin:** Mr. Chair, if I may also propose, then, that once we get the written submissions in, we can also go ahead and prepare the written submissions summary.

**The Chair:** I think that would be very valuable to the committee as well.

**Dr. Massolin:** Thank you.

**The Chair:** Any other components that this committee would like to ask the staff to prepare for us? I think it's useful for us to deal with this by way of a motion as well. If there's a motion to ask the staff to conduct a cross-jurisdictional review as well as a written report of the summary of the written submissions.

All in favour of that, please indicate. That's carried. Thank you very much.

One thing we do need to come back to is the motion I referred to before. We are going to be advertising. I think that I would like direction from the committee

for the deputy chair and the chair to approve the final advertising wording as it's prepared for the committee to circulate.

If someone would move that. Thank you, Mr. Lukaszuk. Any further discussion on that? All in favour? Opposed? That's carried. Thank you very much.

Any other business that anyone else has to suggest?

**Mr. Reynolds:** Just to follow up on the advertising, Melanie had mentioned that the ad would request if people wanted it public or not, and occasionally committees have done that. I think the tendency lately has been to indicate that the submissions would be made public. Where there has been notice about not making them public, it's been in situations where there are perhaps more personal issues at stake; for instance, the review of mental health legislation or where people may be bringing their experiences to bear which may be personal in nature. Perhaps that might be the situation here although I don't necessarily see how the auditor general requirements would necessarily evoke that sort of emotional response.

You may wish to consider just having a notice that the submissions will be made public, that that would be the presumptive rule. I realize it's up to you, Mr. Chair, but that might be something that might deviate from what the committee's understanding is now, so I just want to leave it with you.

**The Chair:** I think clear direction on that would be good. I appreciate you flagging that for us. A motion in that direction?

**Ms Notley:** I so move.

**The Chair:** Thank you, Ms Notley. All in favour of that, please indicate. That's carried. Thank you.

Another item, the date of our next meeting. Given the timeline that we have to work with and the follow-up work that will need to be done between now and reporting time, I would suggest that a mid-September date be selected, maybe somewhere between the 7th and 15th of September if the committee is okay with that. We would poll the committee for availability and set our next meeting date to be in that time frame if you're comfortable with that. Thank you.

There being no other business, I would call for a motion to adjourn the meeting. Mr. Bhardwaj. Thank you.

Thank you for attending this afternoon. I appreciate the input from both committee and staff and look forward to our next meeting in September. Thank you.

[The committee adjourned at 1:25 p.m.]





