



Legislative Assembly of Alberta

The 30th Legislature
First Session

Standing Committee
on
Families and Communities

Monday, June 24, 2019
11:15 a.m.

Transcript No. 30-1-1

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Standing Committee on Families and Communities

Goodridge, Laila, Fort McMurray-Lac La Biche (UCP), Chair
Sigurdson, Lori, Edmonton-Riverview (NDP), Deputy Chair

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Carson, Jonathon, Edmonton-West Henday (NDP)
Ganley, Kathleen T., Calgary-Mountain View (NDP)
Glasgo, Michaela L., Brooks-Medicine Hat (UCP)
Guthrie, Peter F., Airdrie-Cochrane (UCP)
Irwin, Janis, Edmonton-Highlands-Norwood (NDP)
Long, Martin M., West Yellowhead (UCP)
Neudorf, Nathan T., Lethbridge-East (UCP)
Nixon, Jeremy P., Calgary-Klein (UCP)
Pancholi, Rakhi, Edmonton-Whitemud (NDP)
Rutherford, Brad, Leduc-Beaumont (UCP)
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Monday, June 24, 2019

[Ms Goodridge in the chair]

The Chair: Good morning, everybody. It is now 11:15, so I'd like to call the meeting to order. I'd like to welcome all the members and staff in attendance for this orientation meeting of the Standing Committee on Families and Communities.

As you guys know, my name is Laila Goodridge, and I'm the MLA for Fort McMurray-Lac La Biche and the new parliamentary secretary for la Francophonie as well as the chair of this committee. I'd like to ask that members and those joining the committee at the table introduce themselves for the record, starting to my right with the deputy chair.

Ms Sigurdson: Good morning, everyone. My name is Lori Sigurdson. I'm the MLA for Edmonton-Riverview.

Mr. Carson: Good morning. Jon Carson, MLA for Edmonton-West Henday.

Ms Pancholi: Good morning. Rakhi Pancholi, MLA for Edmonton-Whitemud.

Ms Ganley: Good morning, everyone. Kathleen Ganley, MLA, Calgary-Mountain View.

Member Irwin: Good morning. Janis Irwin, Edmonton-Highlands-Norwood.

Mr. Yao: Tany Yao, Fort McMurray-Wood Buffalo.

Mr. Rutherford: Brad Rutherford, MLA for Leduc-Beaumont.

Mr. Long: Martin Long, MLA, West Yellowhead.

Mr. Walker: Jordan Walker, MLA, Sherwood Park.

Ms Glasgo: Michaela Glasgo, MLA, Brooks-Medicine Hat.

Mr. Jeremy Nixon: Jeremy Nixon, MLA, Calgary-Klein.

Mr. Neudorf: Nathan Neudorf, MLA, Lethbridge-East.

Ms Sorensen: Good morning. Rhonda Sorensen, manager of corporate communications with the LAO.

Ms Robert: Good morning. Nancy Robert, research officer.

Ms LeBlanc: Good morning. Stephanie LeBlanc, Senior Parliamentary Counsel.

Dr. Massolin: Hello, everybody. Philip Massolin, manager of research and committee services.

Ms Rempel: Good morning. Jody Rempel, committee clerk.

The Chair: And on the telephone?

Mr. Amery: Good morning. Mickey Amery, MLA for Calgary-Cross.

The Chair: Fantastic.

A few housekeeping items to address before we turn to the business at hand. Please note that the microphones are operated by *Hansard*, so you don't need to turn them on and off, for all the new members here. As well, the committee proceedings are being live streamed on the Internet and on Alberta Assembly TV. I'm going

to ask that you all set your cellphones and other devices to silent for the duration of this meeting.

Just as a piece of information, no motions need to be seconded while we're in committee.

Our first order of business is to approve an agenda for today's meeting. A draft agenda for an orientation meeting was distributed to committee members last week. Would anyone like to propose any amendments? Seeing none, would someone like to make a motion to approve the draft agenda? Mr. Yao. Moved by MLA Yao that the agenda for the June 24, 2019, meeting of the Standing Committee on Families and Communities be adopted as distributed. All in favour? On the phone? Opposed? The motion is carried.

As indicated by the agenda, the purpose of our meeting today is to provide committee members with a brief orientation regarding the mandate and role of the Standing Committee on Families and Communities and to appoint a subcommittee on committee business as required under the standing orders.

First we have to address the possibility of members participating in the committee meetings by teleconference when they're not able to do so in person. Section 6 of the Legislative Assembly Act permits participation in a committee "by means of telephone or other communication facilities that permit all Members participating in the meeting to hear each other if all members of the committee consent." The committee rooms are fully equipped to facilitate meeting participation by telephone, and the committee may wish to pass a motion, which needs to be passed unanimously, to approve meeting attendance by telephone for the duration of the Legislature or for the duration of the session. As such, I would suggest that we entertain a motion to permit participation via teleconference for the entire duration of the 30th Legislature.

With this in mind, I would note that a motion to approve teleconference for the duration of the Legislature does not preclude the committee from determining that an in-person attendance at a specific meeting is required, and in those cases a motion would be considered at the end of the particular meeting requesting the attendance in person for all members at a subsequent meeting.

Would a member like to move a motion? MLA Glasgo has moved that

for the duration of the 30th Legislature the Standing Committee on Families and Communities permit committee members to participate by teleconference subject to the provision that the committee may require members' attendance at a particular meeting upon passage at a previous meeting of a motion to that effect.

Any comments?

If not, I'll call the question. Is anyone in favour of the motion? Any opposed? Thank you.

That motion is carried unanimously.

Next, on to Standing Orders 56(2.1) and (2.4), which outline the process for substitutions of chairs, deputy chairs, and committee members. For convenience, templates have been provided on OurHouse for members to use if they so wish when providing notice of a temporary substitution, both for an e-mail communication or for a written notice. Please note that it's the responsibility of you as the original committee member to ensure that the substituting member is prepared for the meeting and has been provided with all the necessary briefing materials. If a committee meeting is moved to a different date and you still wish to appoint a substitution, you need to submit a new notice. If you have any questions about the substitution process, please feel free to follow up with the committee clerk afterwards. In addition to official substitutes Members of the Legislative Assembly who are not committee members or official substitutes may also attend and participate in committee meetings; however, they may not vote or move motions.

Joining us today are staff from the Legislative Assembly Office, who are on hand to provide nonpartisan support to all of our committee meetings. Joining us at the table: to my left is the committee clerk currently assigned to this committee, Jody Rempel. She is here to provide procedural, administrative, and general assistance as required. She is also the first point of contact for this committee for any inquires from members, staff, and the public. Next we have Dr. Philip Massolin, who is the manager of research and committee services, who oversees committee operations and attends meetings to receive research assignments from the committee and co-ordinate the work of the research team to ensure the completion of research requests. To his left we have Stephanie LeBlanc, who is the Acting Law Clerk and is available to provide legal and procedural assistance to the committee as required. After that we have Nancy Robert, and I'll have Dr. Massolin introduce.

Dr. Massolin: Sure. Two doors down there is Nancy Robert, who is a research officer and will be helping the committee with their research requests.

Thank you.

The Chair: Then after, to her left, we have Rhonda Sorensen, who is the manager of corporate communications. Her staff are available when needed to provide communications expertise to the committee.

In addition to the staff at the table there are staff from other Legislative Assembly Office branches who support our meetings, including members of the Legislative Assembly security services and staff from venue services, who are responsible for managing these meeting facilities. There are also *Alberta Hansard* staff, who run the microphones and other systems during the meeting while recording and transcribing the proceedings, and although we don't usually see them, there are some technical experts just behind us from ITS and broadcasting, who are working hard behind the scenes.

As this is our first meeting, I would like to provide you with an overview of the committee's mandate and processes. The Standing Committee on Families and Communities is one of the three legislative policy committees, often referred to as LPCs. Its mandate relates to the areas of Children's Services, Community and Social Services, Education, Health, Justice and Solicitor General, Seniors and Housing, and Service Alberta. The committee may meet to review a bill or to consider an issue referred to it by the Assembly, and we can also meet on our own initiative to consider issues within our mandate. The annual reports of government departments and provincial agencies, boards, and commissions are referred to LPCs, and these committees may also review regulations and hold public meetings. In addition, every year, when the time comes, typically in the fall, we will be actively involved in the consideration of the main estimates.

As this is a committee of the Legislative Assembly, we are governed by the procedures and practices of this Assembly, including the standing orders where applicable. However, within these limits we are able to determine our own practices and adjust them as needed to take on various tasks. As outlined in the standing orders, primarily in chapter 5, legislative policy committees may take on a number of initiatives or be assigned tasks by the Assembly. In the past legislative policy committees have often been directed to review a bill after first or second reading or deemed by the Assembly to be a special committee for the purposes of a comprehensive statute review. Under Standing Order 52.03 the committee is able to conduct a review of its own initiatives,

provided we are able to complete our work and report back to the Assembly within six months.

Does anyone have any questions on this topic?

11:25

All right. As committee members may recall, all legislative policy committees are required to establish a subcommittee on committee business in this regard. Standing Order 52.011(3) states:

At its first meeting of a new Legislature, every Legislative Policy Committee and the Standing Committee on Public Accounts shall appoint a Subcommittee on Committee Business to meet from time to time at the call of the Chair and to report to the committee on the business of the committee.

As indicated, the purpose of this subcommittee is to meet and report to the committee on matters of the committee's business, which would include making recommendations about timelines and review processes. Ultimately, however, the final decision of all these matters rests with the committee itself. In most cases, unless otherwise directed by the committee, working groups and subcommittees meet in private with the support of the committee clerk, research and committee services, and Parliamentary Counsel. It is anticipated that the process will apply to the work of the subcommittee on committee business.

Do members have any questions about the establishment of this subcommittee?

The standing order requires that the committee establish a subcommittee. In order to do so, we need to pass a motion. I would ask the committee clerk to read a possible motion into the record for consideration.

Ms Rempel: Thank you, Madam Chair. A member of the committee may wish to move that

pursuant to Standing Order 52.011(3) the Standing Committee on Families and Communities appoint a subcommittee on committee business to meet from time to time at the call of the chair to consider and report to the committee on the business of the committee, that the presence of all members of the subcommittee is necessary to constitute a meeting, and that the subcommittee be composed of the following members: the chair as chair, the deputy chair, and a committee member from the government caucus, and that substitutions from the membership of the committee be permitted on the subcommittee.

The Chair: Any comments?

Ms Pancholi: Not specific to this motion, but it would be helpful, I think, if we're to be passing motions, particularly when they're detailed – is it possible to have the motions put up? In previous committee meetings we've had screens so we could all review the wording of the motion before we vote on it.

Ms Rempel: We can certainly do that in the future. Definitely.

The Chair: Any other questions on this particular proposed motion that's on the floor?

All right. Would anyone be willing to move this motion? MLA Neudorf.

Mr. Neudorf: So moved.

The Chair: All in favour of the motion? Any opposed? Fantastic. That motion is carried.

As such, I just wanted to note that the member from the government caucus will be MLA Rutherford, who will be on the subcommittee from the government caucus.

Are there any other issues for discussion before we wrap up today's meeting? MLA Sigurdson.

Ms Sigurdson: Yeah. I just, you know, want to make sure that when we are scheduling meetings, which we've done already – and you and I have met, and it's been great – that we do poll members. I know that we've had a little bit of trouble in other committees, so it would be great just to make sure that we're picking a date that's the best for everyone.

The Chair: Thank you so much for that. As the chair of this committee I intend to send out possible dates of subsequent meetings and poll the members to find the best possible date,

understanding that it is at the prerogative of the chair to call meetings. However, the input of all the committee members is absolutely critical and crucial in having committee meetings.

We will be setting the next meeting at some later date after having future conversations from the subcommittee on committee business.

If there's nothing else for the committee's consideration, I'll call for a motion to adjourn. MLA Nixon. All in favour? Any opposed? That is carried. We are now adjourned.

Thank you so much for your participation here today.

[The committee adjourned at 11:30 a.m.]

