



Legislative Assembly of Alberta

The 27th Legislature
Second Session

Standing Committee
on
Legislative Offices

Tuesday, May 26, 2009
8 a.m.

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Standing Committee on Legislative Offices

Mitzel, Len, Cypress-Medicine Hat (PC), Chair
Lund, Ty, Rocky Mountain House (PC), Deputy Chair

Bhullar, Manmeet Singh, Calgary-Montrose (PC)
Blakeman, Laurie, Edmonton-Centre (AL)
Campbell, Robin, West Yellowhead (PC)
Horne, Fred, Edmonton-Rutherford (PC)
Lukaszuk, Thomas A., Edmonton-Castle Downs (PC)
MacDonald, Hugh, Edmonton-Gold Bar (AL)
Marz, Richard, Olds-Didsbury-Three Hills (PC)
Notley, Rachel, Edmonton-Strathcona (ND)
Webber, Len, Calgary-Foothills (PC)

Legislative Officers

G.B. (Gord) Button	Ombudsman
Fred Dunn	Auditor General
Vacant	Chief Electoral Officer
Neil R. Wilkinson	Ethics Commissioner
Frank Work, QC	Information and Privacy Commissioner

Support Staff

W.J. David McNeil	Clerk
Louise J. Kamuchik	Clerk Assistant/Director of House Services
Micheline S. Gravel	Clerk of <i>Journals</i> /Table Research
Robert H. Reynolds, QC	Senior Parliamentary Counsel
Shannon Dean	Senior Parliamentary Counsel
Corinne Dacyshyn	Committee Clerk
Erin Norton	Committee Clerk
Jody Rempel	Committee Clerk
Karen Sawchuk	Committee Clerk
Cheryl Scarlett	Director of Human Resource Services and IT Services
Rhonda Sorensen	Manager of Communications Services
Melanie Friesacher	Communications Consultant
Tracey Sales	Communications Consultant
Philip Massolin	Committee Research Co-ordinator
Stephanie LeBlanc	Legal Research Officer
Diana Staley	Research Officer
Rachel Stein	Research Officer
Liz Sim	Managing Editor of <i>Alberta Hansard</i>

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[Mr. Mitzel in the chair]

The Chair: Good morning. Welcome. I'd like to call the meeting of the Legislative Offices Committee to order. I want to thank everyone for accommodating this additional meeting. It's early, but it is important that we get this meeting out of the way.

I trust that everyone has a copy of the meeting agenda and the draft request for proposal, which was posted to the committee website last week. If anyone doesn't have an agenda, I think that the clerk does have a couple of extras.

I'd ask that we introduce ourselves for the record before we start with the agenda. My name is Len Mitzel, Cypress-Medicine Hat. I chair the committee.

Mrs. Sawchuk: Karen Sawchuk, committee clerk.

Ms Norton: Erin Norton, committee clerk.

Mr. Lukaszuk: Tom Lukaszuk, Edmonton-Castle Downs.

Mr. MacDonald: Hugh MacDonald, Edmonton-Gold Bar.

Mrs. Scarlett: Cheryl Scarlett, director of human resource services and IT services.

Mrs. Kamuchik: Louise Kamuchik, Clerk Assistant, director of House services.

Mr. Horne: Fred Horne, Edmonton-Rutherford.

Mr. Campbell: Robin Campbell, West Yellowhead.

Mr. Marz: Richard Marz, Olds-Didsbury-Three Hills.

Mr. Lund: Ty Lund, Rocky Mountain House.

The Chair: Thank you.

You have the agenda in front of you. Would a member like to move to adopt the agenda? Moved by Mr. Lund. Any questions? All in favour? It's carried.

This takes us to item 3, the officers of the Legislature, the 2009-2010 annual salary review. Since our discussions will address the specific salaries and/or the classifications of the officers, I'd ask for a motion to move in camera so the committee can discuss these issues freely. Moved by Mr. Campbell. All in favour? Opposed? Motion is carried.

[The committee met in camera from 8:02 a.m. to 8:34 a.m.]

The Chair: We've now returned to the record, and I'd ask Mr. Horne if he'd like to move a motion with respect to the 2009-2010 salary review for the officers of the Legislature.

Mr. Horne: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I would. I move that in accordance with the requirement to review annually the salaries of the officers, the Standing Committee on Legislative Offices reaffirm and apply the compensation strategy for the officers of the Legislature approved at the committee's June 11, 2008, meeting and that each officer be advised of his salary entitlement for 2009-10 consistent with the compensation strategy.

The Chair: Any further discussion on that motion?

If none, I'll call the question. All in favour of that motion? Opposed? That motion is carried.

This takes us to item 4, acting pay for the Deputy Chief Electoral Officer. As the Deputy Chief Electoral Officer, Ms Lori McKee-Jeske has assumed all the duties and powers of the Chief Electoral Officer during the vacancy of that office. Based on public service guidelines Ms McKee-Jeske is eligible to receive a temporary salary increase during the period that she is acting as the Chief Electoral Officer. The committee's discussions may extend to Ms McKee-Jeske's current salary and classification.

I'd like therefore to call for a motion to move in camera. Moved by Mr. Campbell. All in favour? Opposed? That motion is carried.

[The committee met in camera from 8:36 a.m. to 8:44 a.m.]

The Chair: We're back on the record. Mr. Campbell, are you prepared to make a motion?

Mr. Campbell: Yeah. I move that

the Standing Committee on Legislative Offices approve the payment of a salary equal to 72 per cent of the development maximum for the senior officer C range to Ms Lori McKee-Jeske, Deputy Chief Electoral Officer, retroactive to March 4, 2009, and to continue until such time as a Chief Electoral Officer is appointed.

The Chair: Is there any further discussion on the motion?

If not, I'll call the question. All in favour of that motion? Opposed? That motion is carried.

This takes us to item 5, the request for proposal for the auditor for the office of the Auditor General. Members will recall that an RFP was issued in March calling for proposals to complete the annual audit of the office of the Auditor General. There were no submissions received from the 11 or 12 firms within the Edmonton area invited to participate. Our clerk, Mrs. Sawchuk, has revised the RFP timeline and specifications and has been working with the office of the Auditor General with respect to an expanded area for distribution of the RFP.

Karen, would you like to address this item for the committee, please.

Mrs. Sawchuk: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I think there was a combination of items at play here. The timing of the original release kind of hit the fiscal year-end, so a lot of firms that might have taken a bit of time to check out our proposal were busy with their own year-end contracts that they had. So it was one road block. The chief administrative officer of the office of the Auditor General has been working with me. They're looking at a few firms in Calgary and also possibly Red Deer. They're going to provide us with names, but they're quite confident that if we were to reissue the RFP – as mentioned, it's primarily the timeline that's been altered – we would in fact have a few responses. The proposal is to do that if the committee is agreeable to that, and hopefully we'd have something to bring back to the committee at the end of June.

The Chair: Just for the record, too, his office must be audited, and therefore I think we should move ahead with this. Are there any other comments?

Mr. Campbell: Who wants to audit the Auditor?

The Chair: If there are no other comments, are you satisfied with the request for proposal? Okay. Would someone be prepared to make that motion, then? Mr. Lund.

Mr. Lund: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I move that the Standing Committee on Legislative Offices reissue the request for proposal as revised to independent accounting firms inviting proposals to conduct an annual audit of the financial statements including the performance measures of the Auditor General as set out in the Auditor General Act and that the submissions be brought before the committee for review and selection of the successful proposal.

The Chair: All in favour of that motion? Opposed? That motion is carried.

Okay. This takes us to item 6, the 2009 conference attendance. There are two, you'll notice. The CCPAC is the Public Accounts conference, September 13 to 16 here in Edmonton. It's being jointly hosted by the Alberta Standing Committee on Public Accounts and the office of the Auditor General. I guess normally two people have gone from this committee, but because of the anticipated attendance and the fact that it's going to be held on the Assembly floor, perhaps this committee should limit themselves to one because we're actually there as observers as opposed to anything else.

Mr. MacDonald, you might want to comment on the anticipated number of people who may be coming to this, with particular reference to the last one that was held in Whitehorse.

Mr. MacDonald: Yes. Well, there were two members of this committee, as I recall, at the conference in Whitehorse. Whether it's one or two, one more person is really not going to matter. I would say that it's business as usual. I attended a conference, I think, in the year 2000, 1999 on the floor of the Legislative Assembly, and when the seats were filled, we sort of stood aside and let visiting delegations sit in the chairs, and then we just sat around the edge of the Assembly, and it was no issue whatsoever.

Thanks.

The Chair: All right. I wasn't chair then, so I'm not sure how the selection process works with regard to who is going to attend this.

8:50

Mrs. Sawchuk: Mr. Chair, in previous years what the committee has done if there's no clear indication of attendees at the meeting is that we agreed to send out an e-mail polling members. We throw names in a hat, and we draw just based on numbers. The rule of thumb for the CCPAC conference, for the Public Accounts conference, has generally been the chair and one other attendee.

The Chair: Or an alternate.

Mrs. Sawchuk: Or an alternate.

The Chair: Yeah. Given that, if Karen polls the group on anyone who wants to go, then we'll have that on that point there. If the chair is unable to attend, certainly the alternate would be available, then. Is that fine? Okay.

Also, the COGEL conference, the Council on Governmental Ethics Laws, is going to be held in Scottsdale, Arizona. I believe that we had four attendees at the COGEL conference last year. I attended, and Mr. Webber, Ms Blakeman, and Mr. Horne attended the conference last December. This year it'll be held in Scottsdale, Arizona. If we use the same process of polling and we're looking at

the chair and alternates and use the same process for that, is that fine?

Mr. Marz.

Mr. Marz: Yeah. I was just wondering. Using that process, the same people could end up going all the time if they happen to be lucky on the draw. So perhaps those that went last year should be exempted from putting their name in this year.

The Chair: That's a good point. I think that has probably been past practice as well, whether it's been a practice or just an understanding, that the four that went this year may not necessarily be going. It'll be a different four. Okay. That's fine.

I guess we need two motions on these now. We need a motion for each one of these. The first one is for the Public Accounts conference. Is anyone prepared to make a motion? Mr. Campbell.

Mr. Campbell: Okay. I move that the Standing Committee on Legislative Offices designate the chair and deputy chair to attend the Canadian Council of Public Accounts Committees conference in Edmonton from September 13 to 16, 2009, and that a member be approved as the alternate should the chair or deputy chair be unable to attend.

The Chair: That would be by polling.

Mr. Campbell: By polling, yeah. It doesn't say that in the motion, though. I'm just reading what's here.

The Chair: All in favour of the motion? Opposed? That's carried. Now a motion regarding the COGEL conference.

Mr. Marz: I move that the Standing Committee on Legislative Offices designate the chair, the committee clerk, and two members to attend the Council on Governmental Ethics Laws in Scottsdale, Arizona, from December 6 to 9, 2009, and that two members be approved as alternates should one or more of the designated members be unable to attend.

I would add to that motion, Mr. Chair, that those that attended last year wouldn't be eligible to attend this year.

The Chair: Okay. Any discussion on that? If not, all in favour of the motion? Opposed? That is carried.

Is there any other business?

Seeing none, for the next meeting date I think we're looking at the call of the chair. Yeah. We will probably be looking at approval for the RFP, I suppose, for the audit of the Auditor General.

Mr. Campbell: Could I suggest that if we do that before the end of June, we do it the same date as we have set up for the search for the Chief Electoral Officer?

The Chair: That's a good idea. Then we have it in one day, right? Okay.

If there is nothing else, then a motion to adjourn? Moved by Mr. Campbell. All in favour? Thank you.

[The committee adjourned at 8:55 a.m.]

