



Legislative Assembly of Alberta

The 28th Legislature
First Session

Standing Committee
on
Legislative Offices

Monday, June 25, 2012
1:01 p.m.

Transcript No. 28-1-1

**Legislative Assembly of Alberta
The 28th Legislature
First Session**

Standing Committee on Legislative Offices

Xiao, David H., Edmonton-McClung (PC), Chair
McDonald, Everett, Grande Prairie-Smoky (PC), Deputy Chair

Bikman, Gary, Cardston-Taber-Warner (W)
Blakeman, Laurie, Edmonton-Centre (AL)
Brown, Dr. Neil, QC, Calgary-Mackay-Nose Hill (PC)
DeLong, Alana, Calgary-Bow (PC)
Eggen, David, Edmonton-Calder (ND)
Leskiw, Genia, Bonnyville-Cold Lake (PC)
Notley, Rachel, Edmonton-Strathcona (ND)*
Quadri, Sohail, Edmonton-Mill Woods (PC)
Rogers, George, Leduc-Beaumont (PC)
Wilson, Jeff, Calgary-Shaw (W)

* substitution for David Eggen

Legislative Officers

Jill Clayton	Information and Privacy Commissioner
Brian Fjeldheim	Chief Electoral Officer
Del Graff	Child and Youth Advocate
Peter Hourihan	Ombudsman
Merwan Saher	Auditor General
Neil R. Wilkinson	Ethics Commissioner

Support Staff

W.J. David McNeil	Clerk
Robert H. Reynolds, QC	Law Clerk/Director of Interparliamentary Relations
Shannon Dean	Senior Parliamentary Counsel/ Director of House Services
Philip Massolin	Committee Research Co-ordinator
Stephanie LeBlanc	Legal Research Officer
Giovana Bianchi	Committee Clerk
Corinne Dacyshyn	Committee Clerk
Jody Rempel	Committee Clerk
Karen Sawchuk	Committee Clerk
Rhonda Sorensen	Manager of Corporate Communications and Broadcast Services
Scott Lundy	Senior Communications Adviser
Jeanette Dotimas	Communications Consultant
Tracey Sales	Communications Consultant
Liz Sim	Managing Editor of <i>Alberta Hansard</i>

1:01 p.m.

Monday, June 25, 2012

[Mr. Xiao in the chair]

The Chair: Good afternoon. Welcome to this first meeting of the Standing Committee on Legislative Offices with our new membership in place.

To start with, I would like to ask the members and those who are joining us at the table to introduce themselves for the record. I'd like to start with you, deputy chair.

Mr. McDonald: Okay. Everett McDonald, Grande Prairie-Smoky.

Mrs. Leskiw: Genia Leskiw, Bonnyville-Cold Lake.

Mr. Rogers: George Rogers, Leduc-Beaumont.

Ms DeLong: Alana DeLong, Calgary-Bow.

Mr. Quadri: Sohail Quadri, Edmonton-Mill Woods.

Ms Notley: Rachel Notley, Edmonton-Strathcona, sitting in for David Eggen, Edmonton-Calder.

Ms Blakeman: Laurie Blakeman, and I'd like to thank each and every one of you for being in attendance in my fabulous constituency of Edmonton-Centre on this wonderful summer day. Thank you.

Mr. Reynolds: Rob Reynolds, Law Clerk and director of inter-parliamentary relations. I'm counsel to this committee.

Mr. Wilson: Jeff Wilson, Calgary-Shaw.

Mr. Bikman: Gary Bikman, Cardston-Taber-Warner.

Mrs. Sawchuk: Karen Sawchuk, committee clerk.

The Chair: Thank you.

My name, as you know, is David Xiao, chairman of the committee and MLA for Edmonton-McClung.

Dr. Brown: And Neil Brown, Calgary-MacKay-Nose Hill, online.

The Chair: Sorry, Neil. I kind of forgot you.

Yeah. Today we have Rachel Notley substituting for David Eggen, and we received the notice on June 21.

The meeting materials were already posted to the committee's internal website last week, and all of us have access via our LAO laptops or some other computers. But if anyone requires paper copies of those documents, please let our committee clerk know, and Karen will be able to help you with that.

Before we turn to the business at hand, I'd like to talk about a few operational items. The first one is that the microphone consoles are operated by the *Hansard* staff, so there is no need for members to touch them. Please keep cellphones, iPhones, and BlackBerrys off the table as these might interfere with the audio feed. Audio of the committee proceedings is streamed live on the Internet and recorded by *Hansard*. Audio access and the meeting transcripts are obtained via the Legislative Assembly website.

We need a motion on participation in committee meetings by teleconference. Section 6 of the Legislative Assembly Act permits participation in the committee "by means of telephone or other communication facilities that permit all Members participating in the meeting to hear each other if all the members of the committee consent." This requires unanimous consent.

The committee rooms are equipped to facilitate meeting participation by telephone. Committees have a choice of passing 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 a session. A motion to approve teleconference attendance for the duration of the Legislature does not preclude the committee from determining that personal attendance at specific meetings is required. In those cases, a motion would be moved at the end of the particular meeting, requesting the personal attendance of all members at a subsequent meeting.

I would ask the committee clerk to circulate the draft motion to members so that we have the correct wording and information necessary for this motion.

Laurie, you've got a question?

Ms Blakeman: Yes, I do. Is there any mention in the rules or anything we're using for guidance on this about how many people have to be present in person? In other words, could the entire meeting be held with everyone on the telephone, which I don't think is a terribly good idea? I'm seeking guidance as to whether or not there's anything that requires some people, a quarter of the committee, something, to be in person, sir.

The Chair: Mr. Reynolds, you want to make some comments about this?

Mr. Reynolds: Karen, did you want to say anything?

Mrs. Sawchuk: I can just say from experience that we have gone with only two members physically in attendance and other members participating by phone.

Mr. Reynolds: Yes. It depends on how the committee wishes to proceed. Certainly, if the motion that you are passing authorizes participation by teleconference, then members who are teleconferencing in are deemed to be at the meeting for all purposes.

For instance, today there's a motion to allow someone to participate by teleconference, so there has to be a quorum here to allow that. If, you know, the committee decides to pass that particular motion, then people participating by teleconference would not require any further procedure or precondition before they could participate in the meeting.

Is that clear?

Ms Blakeman: Yes, it is. Thank you very much.

The Chair: Okay. Shall we proceed?

You've got a question, Rachel? Go ahead.

Ms Notley: I'm just looking at the motion, and I have a question about the motion itself, but if procedurally someone wants to move it before I ask those questions, that's fine, too.

The Chair: Yeah. I would like to ask: George, are you going to move the motion?

Mr. Rogers: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would move that for the life of the 28th Legislature the Standing Committee on Legislative Offices permit committee members to participate by teleconference subject to the proviso that the committee may require members' attendance at a particular meeting upon passage of a motion to that effect.

The Chair: Dr. Brown cannot vote on this motion until this motion passes. We don't need a seconder for this motion. Any questions? Rachel, go ahead.

Ms Notley: Yeah, I did have a question. I guess my question is twofold. First of all, I'm just wondering if this is the wording that we've used in the past to allow this. If not, why was there a difference? The concern I have, I suppose, is this notion: subject to the proviso that the committee may require members' attendance at a particular meeting upon passage of a motion to that effect. I am concerned that you could have a situation where the majority of the committee passes a motion to that effect at the very meeting where the person is thinking that they're attending by conference call, the way it reads right now.

That is of some concern because I know that there has already been one meeting where this issue has already attracted some attention. I think that needs to be clearer in there, and that's why I start by asking if this language is what's been used in the past or if there is any implicit suggestion around notice for that kind of thing.

The Chair: Mr. Reynolds, you want to make comments?

Mr. Reynolds: Thank you very much. Ms Notley, this is the motion that, I believe, is identical to the one that was approved by the Members' Services Committee. Obviously, it says Members' Services instead of Legislative Offices for them, but this was the motion that was passed by that committee.

With respect to your concern about the proviso certainly when I read that, I thought the intention was that the motion requiring a person's attendance would be passed at the previous meeting. That's how I interpreted it.

1:10

Ms Blakeman: It doesn't say that.

Mr. Reynolds: Well, yes, it doesn't say that. I'm not sure. That's how I would interpret it, but this is the motion that was passed, and I believe it mirrors motions that had been passed in the past by committees.

Mr. Bikman: What if you just strike out the words "particular meeting" and put "future meeting"? Pretty simple.

Mr. Reynolds: Yes, I'm sure it is. I believe it would accomplish what you say, but of course it's the committee's decision if you want to amend or whatever.

Mr. Bikman: I think it's a just concern.

An Hon. Member: At a future meeting.

The Chair: At a future meeting, yeah.

Mr. Bikman: No. Future. Attendance at a previous meeting being required would be even worse. Rewriting history? We've seen that happen.

The Chair: So is that a friendly amendment? Would you accept it, Mr. Rogers?

Mr. Rogers: I think it could be friendly if we're all clear on the term, and I thought it would probably need "upon passage at a previous meeting to that effect" so it's clear that that must be done at a previous meeting.

Ms Blakeman: I'm sorry, member. Could you read your friendly . . .

Mr. Rogers: My friendly amendment?

Ms Blakeman: Yes, please.

Mr. Rogers: Okay. Thank you. If I may, Mr. Chairman: "at a particular meeting upon passage of a motion at the preceding meeting to that effect."

Mr. Quadri: Preceding meeting or future meeting?

Mr. Rogers: Well, no. You're going to pass the motion at the previous meeting to the effect that you want everybody at the next meeting. That's my thought, but we can redo it till it works for everybody.

Ms Blakeman: That's all right. I think that satisfies a number of things, and it does allow us, for example, at the beginning of a process to say, "and the last meeting we would like everyone in attendance," so it's not specific to the next meeting. It just says that in advance we have to decide that, and it's a particular meeting that we're saying it for, so that satisfies my concerns.

The Chair: Okay.

Mr. Rogers, would you read your . . .

Mr. Rogers: Well, if I may, Mr. Chairman, I'll just read the whole motion again as I see it. Should we just withdraw the first one, for procedure?

The Chair: Here, let me try this.

Mrs. Sawchuk: Did you want me to read it, Mr. Chair?

The Chair: Okay. You go ahead.

Mrs. Sawchuk: Mr. Chair, the change would be starting midway through our motion as proposed: subject to the proviso that the committee may require members' attendance at a future meeting upon passage of a motion at a previous meeting.

The Chair: To that effect.

Mrs. Sawchuk: To that effect.

Mr. Reynolds: Yes. I had left "future" in there, but after the discussion I had taken it out.

I had assumed, Mr. Chair, if I may just assert my understanding, that it would say, if I may just start halfway through:

permit committee members to participate by teleconference subject to the proviso that the committee may require members' attendance at a particular meeting upon passage of a motion at a previous meeting to that effect.

The Chair: Yeah. That's good.

Mr. Reynolds: So then the motion would be amended by adding, "at a previous meeting" following "passage of a motion."

The Chair: Good. Yeah, that's good.

Mr. Rogers, can you move your motion?

Mr. Rogers: Yes, I'm willing to move this motion as restated, Mr. Chairman.

The Chair: Yeah, sure.

Mr. Reynolds: Oh, well, okay. Sorry. You can move your motion and then the amendment. The motion is already on the floor.

Mr. Rogers: The motion is on the floor. Okay.

The Chair: Yeah, okay.

Mr. Reynolds: So you would have the amendment as I read it, I would imagine.

Ms Notley: Do you want to move the amendment, then?

The Chair: Okay. Yeah, sure.

Anybody oppose the friendly amendment?

Mr. Rogers: Well, the amendment, then: would it be by Rachel?

Ms Notley: I'll do the amendment.

Mr. Rogers: Okay.

The Chair: Anyone opposed? No.

Ms Blakeman: Question.

The Chair: Questions? No questions. I can see that.

Some Hon. Members: No. Call the question.

The Chair: I'll call the question on the motion. There's a friendly amendment to the motion.

Mr. Rogers: The question on the amendment.

Ms Blakeman: Yes. The question is the vote.

The Chair: Yeah. Excuse me. This is my first time. Okay.

I'll call the vote. Anyone in favour of the motion? Okay. The motion is carried unanimously.

Ms Blakeman: That's the amendment, so now we have the full motion as amended.

The Chair: Yeah.

I would like to ask Mr. Rogers: would you like to restate it again?

Mr. Rogers: I think we're good, Mr. Chairman. Just the question on the motion as amended.

The Chair: Okay. The amendment has passed, so now I'll call the vote on the amended motion. All in favour of the motion, please? Okay. It is unanimously passed. The motion is carried.

Here we go. Sorry about that.

An Hon. Member: We couldn't see Neil's hand.

Mr. Reynolds: He can't vote yet.

The Chair: No. Dr. Brown can vote now, after this motion. Sorry about that.

Next I would also like to ask a member to move adoption of our meeting agenda. Okay. Rachel Notley. I would like to call the vote. Any objection to this motion? No. All those in favour please raise your hands. The motion is carried unanimously.

Now I'd like to move to the orientation. The mandate and the meeting schedule. Members should have a copy of the committee meeting schedule, which was already posted on the internal committee website. It notes there the two primary periods

annually during which the committee meets to consider specific issues as well as other duties within this mandate which arise from time to time and require the attention of the committee. This is an information item, and no motion is required.

Are there any questions from members?

Ms Notley: I assume specific dates will be circulated?

The Chair: Yeah. That's what I'm saying.

Karen, would you like to help with that question?

Mrs. Sawchuk: We kind of put the periods during the year because we don't know the dates until we have the information and deadlines we need.

The Chair: Yeah. I understand. We will probably post the information on the website a week prior to the meeting. That's what we'll do.

Go ahead.

Mrs. Leskiw: A week prior: especially for most of us that are travelling in, a lot of times we need a little bit more.

The Chair: Yeah. That's another thing that we will talk about. Before we call the meeting, basically the clerk will poll the members to see the availability of the members. Then we will pick the date that is convenient to a majority of the members. That's what we will do.

Also, I just want to talk about the committee operations and support staff. A copy of the committee's 2012-2013 budget was posted on the committee's internal website. The budget has already been approved by the Members' Services Committee; therefore, this document is provided for information purposes only. So you just keep that for your own reference.

Go ahead, Laurie.

1:20

Ms Blakeman: I'm just wondering. With the budget I'm noticing quite an increase in difference, and I'm assuming that the larger amount is because the committee has had additional members added to it or that the cost of travel is more expensive. In just looking, we've got it going from \$57,000 in '11-12 to \$73,000 in 2012-13, which is percentagewise not insignificant. These committees run pretty efficiently. I'm just wondering. I mean, the travel is up by some and labour and services. If we could just get a brief explanation of that. This was done before, but it wouldn't hurt to refresh our memories.

Mrs. Sawchuk: One item that can vary is the travel. It's dependent on the location of the conference. We try to have the information in hand before we're doing that budgeting, but sometimes it's, you know, done kind of in advance of the confirmation, so there might have been a bit extra added there. Plus, we also have to provide for out-of-town members' travel expenses for general meetings. The other, labour and services, is the audit fee that we pay to the auditor for the office of the Auditor General. There is a clause in the five-year contract that was signed by the committee for a certain percentage increase each year. It's very minimal, but over years, you know, it does add up.

The Chair: Any further questions? Seeing none.

Also, as everybody already knows, Karen Sawchuk is the committee clerk assigned to this committee to provide administra-

tive and procedural assistance, and she is the first point of contact for committee business. Please direct any questions about committee activities to Karen, and she will assist you.

Rob Reynolds, Law Clerk and director of interparliamentary relations, is the Senior Parliamentary Counsel assigned to this committee and assists when issues arise requiring his legal expertise.

Dr. David McNeil, Clerk of the Assembly, and Cheryl Scarlett, director of human resources, information technology and broadcasting services, may be called upon to assist the committee during the consideration of officers' contracts, terms of office, and salary reviews.

General meeting procedures. The meetings are held at the call of the chair, and generally, just like I mentioned before, Karen will poll members to determine their availability for a number of days provided through the chair. Meeting confirmations are e-mailed to members once a meeting date and time are set, and the briefing materials are posted on the committee's internal website approximately one week prior to the meeting. During the meetings the chair keeps track of members wishing to ask questions, so I will do that, and I will do my best to make sure everybody has a fair chance to speak and to participate in the discussion.

About the next item, the overview of the officers of the Legislature, I also would just like to mention that members should have a copy of the officers' terms of office and position classification sheet, which was posted on our internal committee website. We also have a brochure that was a joint project of the officers, highlighting each office, the relevant statutes, and a general overview of their respective mandates. I think now we're handing those out. I know some of the new members might have the brochure, the pamphlet, you know, through your training session. A few revisions have been made since then, so now you have a new one. This information item: hopefully, now everybody has got one.

Under the respective statutes for the officers the committee must review the salaries of the officers annually and review the estimates of each office. Following the committee's review the estimates are provided to the Minister of Finance for presentation to the Assembly as part of the budget. Also, the committee may on the recommendation of a respective officer order that any regulation, order, or directive under the Financial Administration Act or under the Public Service Act be made inapplicable to or varied with respect to that office. As noted in the committee schedule discussed under item 3(a), there are other matters which the officers may bring forward to the committee for its consideration.

Are there any questions about this?

Ms Blakeman: I'm sorry. Could you repeat the section you just mentioned about changes? I don't remember hearing that before.

The Chair: Okay. Which part are you talking about? Following the committee's review the estimates are provided to the Minister of Finance for presentation to the Assembly as part of the budget.

Ms Blakeman: Yes.

The Chair: Also, the committee may on the recommendation of the respective officer order that any regulation, order, or directive under the Financial Administration Act or under the Public Service Act be made inapplicable to or varied with respect to that office as noted in the committee schedule discussed under item 3(a). This is probably what you mean.

Ms Blakeman: Yeah. That's okay.

The Chair: So it's good? Okay.
Any further questions?

Ms Blakeman: Just for the reassurance of those of you joining this committee – I know some of you have been on it before – through a long and somewhat arduous process we have arrived at the schedule of payment for the various officers, and we did consider all of this very carefully. It was to give us some sort of structure.

When we started, increases were given, in my opinion, on a willy-nilly basis. We wanted to be able to hook it to something that was reasonable and defensible to those of our constituents, my constituents, that are walking around outside. After a number of different approaches to it we did finally have a review done and accepted, which reviewed the officers against similar jobs in other provinces and also against similar jobs in this province. So you see that they're a senior officer D and the term of office that they hold. But particularly the senior officer D: that's their salary range. We did spend considerable time arriving at this. I hope that's helpful.

The Chair: Yeah. That's a very good question. I would like to let Ms Blakeman know that because we got this information fairly late, actually last Friday, I believe, this is going to be on our next meeting agenda. We will let the Leg. office work out the details before the next meeting, and we will provide all the relevant information to the members of the committee prior to the next meeting.

Ms Blakeman: You're talking about grid increases?

The Chair: Yeah. Everything.

Ms Blakeman: Okay. Good.

The Chair: Any further questions?

Mrs. Leskiw: Just a point.

The Chair: Yeah. Go ahead.

Mrs. Leskiw: When stuff like that is being written, it's a lot easier if we'd have what the chair read in front of us. Some of us are visual learners, and when you hear it and see it, it sinks in. Otherwise, it's a very detailed document that he's reading, and it's very hard for us newbies on this committee to comprehend it.

Ms Blakeman: Well, I'd love to have the script circulated.

The Chair: Yeah. The thing is that I think the version may not be finalized until the last few minutes before I walk into the meeting room. I can tell that. Karen and I had several meetings before this meeting. I have no problem passing that on.

Mr. Rogers.

1:30

Mr. Rogers: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. If I may just for the benefit of the committee follow up on Ms Blakeman's point, I think it's also important just to help to educate the members that if you look at the terms of the positions of a lot of these officers, a lot of them are fairly new. We actually went through – Ms Blakeman, Ms Notley, and myself were members of the committee most recently that over a period of probably a couple of years replaced a lot of these officers.

I just want to state that the schedules are very current in terms of how they're paid and the different levels in the pay structure. So for the benefit of the committee members that are probably

wondering just how we got to this place, it's something that did take a lot of work, and it's actually fairly current. It may save us some time in the future if there's some desire that maybe we need to dig through and revamp these numbers. I mean, that certainly is the committee's prerogative, but just for your information these schedules are fairly current based on the fact that we've just recruited in the last couple of years most of these officers to these positions.

Ms DeLong: That's fine, but I would actually appreciate at least an excerpt of what you did read to us so that we understand that information a little better in print. I'd appreciate that if we could do that.

The Chair: The chair is advised that most of the materials I went through are provided in the package that you received, the committee schedule. If you require any information, probably you can go to – it's posted on the website. There's a lot of information there.

Now, since there are no further questions, I'd like to move to the next one. It's about the report on the 2011-2012 audit of the office of the Auditor General. As you may know from the committee schedule discussed under item 3(a), the chair and the deputy chair met on Friday, June 22, with the Auditor General and senior staff from his office as well as the audit team from St. Arnaud Pinsent Steman, the firm under contract to conduct the annual audit of the office of the Auditor General. For the committee's information the 2011-12 audit was completed without any issues identified, and the final report of the auditor has been distributed to the members for your information.

Any questions about this report?

Ms Blakeman: A bit of a speed-read there, boss. A question on material weakness in internal control on page 4. "Our observations and recommendations have been attached regarding weaknesses in internal controls." Attached to what?

The Chair: On the last page of the material you got, right there on the last page of that package.

Ms Blakeman: On page 6?

The Chair: Yes.

Ms Blakeman: Okay. Got it.

The Chair: Any questions about this report? No? Okay.

Let's move to the next item. The next item is about attending a conference. It's called the Council on Governmental Ethics Laws conference. The 2012 conference is going to be held in Columbus, Ohio, from December 2 to 5. This association comprises members of ethics, elections, and information and privacy officers as well as oversight organizations.

The committee budget covers the attendance of the chair, the committee clerk, and two members. As well, two members will be identified as alternates should someone be unable to attend. If necessary we will conduct a draw right away.

I understand Ms Laurie Blakeman has attended this conference many times.

Ms Blakeman: Three times.

The Chair: Three times. Okay.

If anybody has any questions about this conference, probably Laurie would be kind enough to provide some answers or some information about this.

Ms Blakeman: Sure. I'd be happy to answer any questions anyone has.

While I've got the microphone, I'll put my name forward for next year. It's the only conference that I find really interesting, but it's incredibly technical, policy-wonk stuff. So if you embrace policy wonkiness . . .

An Hon. Member: You'll scare the newbies away.

Ms Blakeman: Fine. I will let you go.

I do say that if you embrace wonkiness, please attend. And I'll put my name in again. Thank you.

The Chair: Okay. Thank you.

Those members interested in attending this conference, please identify yourselves right now. Okay. Ms DeLong. If we get more than two members who want to go, then we have to have a draw.

Mr. Quadri: Did you say the chair and co-chair and two other people, so four altogether from this committee?

The Chair: Yeah.

Okay. Mr. Quadri and Ms DeLong and Mr. Wilson. Only three?

Mrs. Sawchuk: Mr. Chair, we have four. We have Blakeman, DeLong, Wilson, and Quadri.

1:40

The Chair: Okay. The first draw will be for the two delegates, and then the second draw will be for the two alternates.

The first one is Ms DeLong as an attendee. The second one is Mr. Quadri as an attendee. Since we've only got two names remaining in the box, these two will be the alternates automatically. The first alternate is Mr. Wilson, and the second one would be Ms Blakeman.

Dr. Brown?

Dr. Brown: Yes.

The Chair: We didn't have your name in the box for the draw.

Dr. Brown: That's because I didn't put my name in the box.

The Chair: So I'm good?

Dr. Brown: Good.

The Chair: Now we need somebody to move the motion that the Standing Committee on Legislative Offices approve the chair and the committee clerk as attendees, Ms DeLong and Mr. Quadri as attendees, and Mr. Wilson and Ms Blakeman as alternates to attend the 2012 Council on Governmental Ethics Laws conference in Columbus, Ohio, from December 2 to 5, 2012.

Mrs. Leskiw: I so move.

The Chair: Okay. Mrs. Leskiw moved the motion. Anyone in favour of the motion? Any opposed? The motion is carried. Thank you.

The next item on the agenda is the report on the 2011 COGEL conference. The 2011 delegates' report was posted to the committee website for information purposes. The report will be included in the Legislative Assembly Office annual report for 2011-2012.

The last item is about temporary substitutions. For your information Standing Order 56(2.1) outlines the process for the substitution of committee members.

A temporary substitution in the membership of a standing or special committee may be made upon written notification signed by the original Member and filed with the Clerk and Committee Chair, provided such notice is given not less than 24 hours prior to the meeting.

The committee clerk has a template available upon request when substitutions occur. It is the responsibility of the original committee member to ensure that the substitute has been provided with all the necessary meeting materials.

You are reminded that Members of the Legislative Assembly who are not committee members or official substitutions may still attend and participate in the meetings, but they may not move motions or vote.

George.

Mr. Rogers: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Just, if I may, to back up before we deal with this item, I'm wondering to the clerk: do we not need a motion to accept the 2011 report for information for the records of this committee, or has that not been our practice in the past?

Mrs. Sawchuk: We haven't, provided that the document has been signed off by the delegates to the conference. In this case – and I neglected to make mention of that – Ms Blakeman is the only member still left as a Member of the Legislative Assembly who was in attendance, and she did in fact sign off on it. The deadline was quite a bit earlier.

Mr. Rogers: I'm just thinking that for the official records of the committee we probably should have a motion to accept this report for information.

Mrs. Sawchuk: Sure. Accept the report as reviewed. Yes.

Mr. Rogers: If it's okay, Mr. Chairman, I'd move that motion before we deal with this last item.

The Chair: Sure. We can do that.

Mr. Rogers: I move that
we accept the report on the 2011 COGEL conference as
circulated.

The Chair: Okay. Those who are in favour of this motion, please raise your hand. Anybody opposed to the motion? The motion is carried.

Before we talk about the date and the time of the next meeting, does any member wish to raise any other items for the committee? I see none. That's good.

I think Karen sent an e-mail to everybody and also Ms Blakeman raised the issue about the compensation, the pay of the officers, so we need to schedule another meeting. In order to complete the review in a timely manner, I would like to suggest that this meeting be scheduled before the end of July. We probably only need one to one and a half hours for this meeting. Are there any suggestions or recommendations?

Dr. Brown: I'd like to suggest July 16.

The Chair: Okay. July 16. That's just one suggestion, though.

Mrs. Leskiw: I would suggest maybe the 24th of July since a lot of us are here already for the Premier's breakfast on the 23rd.

Mr. Wilson: I was definitely planning to attend that.

Mrs. Leskiw: I like your sense of humour.

Mr. McDonald: I would suggest the 23rd or 24th. There are a lot of activities in the city that week. The week of the 16th is kind of open.

The Chair: Any other suggestions?

Ms Blakeman: I think you just need to be careful that you've got a reasonable number of opposition members here. With the government members being the majority on the committee, it's too easy to vote for the time that best fits that agenda and too easily leaves out or makes it difficult for members of the opposition parties to be here, so that's my only caution to you. The week of the 24th, I gather, is suiting the government members. Is it suiting the opposition as well?

Dr. Brown: Not this government member. I'd prefer the 16th.

Ms Blakeman: I'm with you. I'm for the 16th, too.

Ms DeLong: I can't even teleconference on that day.

Mr. Bikman: I have to be here on the 24th for another meeting at 1 o'clock in the afternoon. So if we were going to do it, it would have to be the morning for me.

The Chair: Okay. That's fine.

Dr. Brown: Do the morning, then.

The Chair: The 24th?

Mr. Bikman: We've already approved teleconference if necessary, right?

The Chair: Rachel and Laurie, which date do you most like?

Ms Notley: Well, I checked with Mr. Eggen. He is not available next week but appears to be available the following, both options that are being discussed, so I don't have a preference.

The Chair: Okay.

Ms Blakeman: I'm okay on the 24th, actually. I'm sorry; are we talking mornings?

The Chair: Yeah. Sure.

Ms Blakeman: Okay. What does morning mean to you?

Dr. Brown: If you make it at 10 o'clock in the morning, it allows people a reasonable time to get up to Edmonton on a Monday.

Ms Blakeman: Yeah. Sorry. Are we now not talking the 24th?

The Chair: So what about the 23rd, then? What about the 23rd, maybe in the afternoon?

Ms Blakeman: I'll have to phone in, but that's no big deal.

1:50

The Chair: You want to do it in the morning or after lunch? We can buy lunch. Do you want to do that? Okay. Let's meet from 1 p.m. to 3 p.m. on the 23rd of July – is that okay? – and lunch will be provided. You can come here around 12, so then we can have some lunch before the meeting.

Any further questions?

Mrs. Leskiw: If there are any documents that we need to look at – a lot of us are new here. Today I just found that so much was covered, and I really still don't know what it is that this committee is supposed to be doing. It would be nice to be informed. If we are going to have a good discussion that means anything, I think it's important that we're informed. So whatever is going to be discussed, any materials that can be given to us to look at prior to coming to this meeting would be greatly appreciated.

The Chair: To answer your question, Genia, like last week, we often meet with the Auditor General to talk about what we want to do for the members. We would like to invite all the six legislative officers to do a presentation about what they do, their mandate, to the committee. That would help all the committee members, including the chair, to have a much better appreciation and understanding about the mandate of this committee. So what do you think?

Mrs. Sawchuk: Mr. Chair, could I just address this?

The Chair: Sure. Go ahead, Karen.

Mrs. Sawchuk: I guess the committee schedule should have properly been titled committee schedule and mandate. All of the items listed there are the duties of this committee. They're referred to on the bottom of that committee schedule sheet. Those are the functions that this committee may from time to time be required to do. It doesn't occur every year, but those are the items that the committee may have to deal with.

The Chair: Yeah. Good.
Any further questions?

Ms Blakeman: Genia, what's missing from this is having to do the recruitment, review, and recommendations on people filling the legislative officer positions. As was mentioned earlier, we've just done a complete go-round. So there's no expectation at this point that anybody would be – and that's a subcommittee of this committee. It makes it look like our committee is a little light on work, and that may be so, at least for the first year.

Then if we start to lose officers, it becomes much more intensive because it's about a six-month process if you're sitting on the subcommittee to recruit, interview, shortlist, blah, blah, and recommend the officers. I've now done all of them twice and some of them three times. As Mr. Rogers mentioned, we just filled three of the positions in the last year.

The committee schedule page really is for the different meetings that we have: one for the salaries, one for the annual reports, and one for the budget generally, so three solid meetings a year. Plus, occasionally we meet additionally to address some unforeseen issues that have come up.

The Chair: I also would remind the members that we listed all of the main duties of this committee on this committee schedule, on the bottom here, so you can find that information there.

If there are no further questions, I'd like to thank all the members for attending the meeting. The committee clerk will provide written confirmation of the next meeting to the committee.

Any other questions? No.

We just need a motion to adjourn the meeting. Ms DeLong. All in favour of the motion? Opposed? The meeting is adjourned.

[The committee adjourned at 1:55 p.m.]

