



Legislative Assembly of Alberta

The 28th Legislature
First Session

Standing Committee
on
Legislative Offices

Monday, July 23, 2012
1:00 p.m.

Transcript No. 28-1-2

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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)
Quadri, Sohail, Edmonton-Mill Woods (PC)
Rogers, George, Leduc-Beaumont (PC)
Wilson, Jeff, Calgary-Shaw (W)

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

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Philip Massolin	Manager of Research Services
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>

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[Mr. Xiao in the chair]

The Chair: Okay. Welcome, everybody, to this meeting of the Standing Committee on Legislative Offices. I would like to ask the members and those joining the committee at the table to introduce themselves for the record. We do have one member, as you know already, teleconferencing today. I would like to ask Ms Blakeman if you could introduce yourself first, please.

Ms Blakeman: I'm happy to, Mr. Chairman, but I am very sad that I am not in the fabulous constituency of Edmonton-Centre. That is who I represent, and my name is Laurie Blakeman.

The Chair: Okay. You go ahead.

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

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

Mr. Wilson: Jeff Wilson, Calgary-Shaw.

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

Mr. Eggen: David Eggen, Edmonton-Calder.

Mrs. Scarlett: Cheryl Scarlett, director of human resources for the Leg. Assembly.

Mr. Reynolds: Rob Reynolds, Law Clerk and director of inter-parliamentary relations for the Legislative Assembly.

Dr. McNeil: David McNeil, Clerk of the Legislative Assembly.

Mr. Rogers: George Rogers, Leduc-Beaumont.

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

Dr. Brown: Neil Brown, Calgary-Mackay-Nose Hill.

Mrs. Sawchuk: Karen Sawchuk, committee clerk.

The Chair: David Xiao for Edmonton-McClung and the chair of the committee.

The meeting materials were posted to the committee's internal website on July 13. If anyone requires copies of these documents, please let the clerk know.

Before we start, I have an item to bring forward under other business respecting the office of the Child and Youth Advocate.

Would a member move adoption of the agenda, please?

Mrs. Leskiw: I so move.

The Chair: Thank you. All in favour? Any opposed? The motion is carried.

Are there any errors or omissions to note in the June 25, 2012, minutes? If not, I would have a motion to approve the minutes, please.

Mr. Wilson: I so move.

The Chair: Mr. Wilson moved the minutes. All in favour? Any opposed? The motion is carried.

Members should have a copy of the primary motions document, which was posted to the committee's internal website. This document highlights the motions made by the committee since 2008,

starting with a compensation strategy for the officers of the Legislature as well as a motion identifying position classifications for the officers as set by the committee utilizing the classification schedule for senior officials within the public service of Alberta.

We'll be discussing the individual salaries and classifications of the officers of the Legislature, so I would suggest that we move in camera. Of course, any decisions of the committee in this respect will be made by motion once we return to the record. Would a member like to make the motion, please? Mr. Rogers. All in favour? Any opposed? The motion is carried.

[The committee met in camera from 1:04 p.m. to 1:49 p.m.]

The Chair: Okay. We're back on the record. I would like to ask if a member would make a motion respecting the compensation strategy for the officers of the Legislature. Ms DeLong. All in favour?

Ms DeLong: No. I have to read it first.

The Chair: Sorry. Everybody has got a copy. Okay. Go ahead.

Ms DeLong: I move that

the Standing Committee on Legislative Offices reaffirm the compensation strategy approved at its June 11, 2008, meeting, providing for an annual cost-of-living adjustment parallel with that provided to public service management employees, as well as a salary modifier of 5 per cent not to exceed the maximum of the position salary range, and a long-service lump sum payment of 3 per cent to any officer who has served a minimum of five full years in his or her position as of April 1 of that year.

The Chair: Okay. So then we open the floor to questions or comments. Any questions? Mr. Rogers.

Mr. Rogers: No. I was calling the question.

The Chair: Okay. You were calling the question.

All in favour? Any opposed? The motion is carried.

There's a second motion for the committee's consideration respecting the 2012-13 compensation review for the officers of the Legislature. Would a member make this motion, please? Mr. Rogers.

Mr. Rogers: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would move that in accordance with the requirement to review annually the salaries of the officers, the Standing Committee on Legislative Offices apply the compensation strategy for the officers of the Legislature as reaffirmed and that each officer be advised of his or her salary entitlement for the 2012-13 fiscal year effective April 1, 2012, consistent with the compensation strategy.

The Chair: Okay. Any questions or comments?

Mr. Eggen: I just think we need to amend that portion of the motion that has "his" to read "his or her."

Mr. Rogers: I did.

The Chair: He just read it.

Mr. Eggen: Oh, yes. Okay. Good. Perfect.

The Chair: I'd like to call the question. All in favour? Any opposed? The motion is carried.

Other business. I touched on the subject briefly at our last meeting. I would like to suggest that the committee extend an invitation to each of the officers to attend a future meeting and provide an orientation on the mandate of their respective office. I

believe that this would assist the committee in its various functions relating to the officers. What are your thoughts on this? Any comments?

Mrs. Leskiw: I think it's a good idea to have them attend so that we're familiarized with who they are and at the same time what it is that they do for the people of Alberta. I think it's a great idea, and maybe when we're sitting in this committee, we'd have a better understanding of this whole compensation package and everything that they do. I think it would be a good learning experience for all of us.

The Chair: Okay.

Dr. Brown: Personally, I wouldn't find it terribly useful to over-view the mandate. I think I understand what they do. I think that if we combined it with some sort of a discussion of what their priorities and strategies might be, their plans for the coming year, I think it might be more worthwhile. I think we do that when we review the budgets every year. We ask them what their priorities are. I personally would be much more interested in having a meeting to discuss what they're doing and what we think their priorities should be.

The Chair: Actually, that would be the chair's intention, that they could provide information about their business plan and the budget.

Any other questions? The clerk has a comment?

Mrs. Sawchuk: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Well, the committee does receive the business plans along with the budget submissions later in the fall. I think the intent was that this would just be an overview for the newer members.

The Chair: Okay.

Mr. McDonald.

1:55

Mr. McDonald: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I think that for the new members such as myself it's a good opportunity, rather than during budget or when we're busy doing a lot of things, if we have these gentlemen come in and just talk briefly. It doesn't have to be a huge day spent, just saying, you know, "This is what I do, and this is why we do it" so we can understand how we operate as government and as business and how we can understand their positions.

I certainly support having them come in, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Wilson: I would tend to agree. I think that knowledge is power, and I believe that this committee needs as much of that as possible.

The Chair: Okay. Any other comments?

If not, I would like a member to move a motion in this respect.
Mr. Bikman.

Mr. Bikman: I move that

the Standing Committee on Legislative Offices invite the officers of the Legislature to attend at a future committee meeting to provide an orientation on the mandates of their respective offices.

The Chair: Okay. All in favour? Any opposed? The motion is carried.

The additional item under other business is a request I received recently in my capacity as the chair of this committee. The Child and Youth Advocate is asking, you know, for the committee's assistance with respect to proposed amendments to the new Child

and Youth Advocate Act. I would like to suggest that the committee invite the advocate to address this item at our next meeting following his presentation on the mandate of his office.

Before we go any further, members should be aware that while changes to legislation may sometimes be brought to the committee for consideration, it is important to note that the committee does not have the mandate to approve the changes, but its recommendation can be forwarded to the Minister of Justice.

Mr. Reynolds, would you like to make some comments?

Mr. Reynolds: Mr. Chair, I think you've covered it adequately. It's just that the Child and Youth Advocate, who is the newest officer of the Legislature, is encountering a few rough spots, as it were, with the operation of the legislation. Of course, when that office was part of what is now the Ministry of Human Services, the advocate would work through the ministry to develop the amendments. But now that he's an officer of the Legislature, I think he wants, in the interests of transparency here, to come before the committee.

If the committee agrees in principle with these, one avenue that has been pursued in the past is for the committee to recommend the change, as you said, to the appropriate minister. The committee doesn't get involved in drafting the amendment per se, but if it agrees, it recommends it in principle to the minister, who would then presumably bring it forward.

The Chair: Okay. Any questions or comments?

If not, if the committee is in agreement, the committee clerk can look after correspondence from the chair to the advocate, inviting him to address the issue at our next meeting.

Any other items for discussion under other business?

If not, we'll move on to the date of our next meeting. You know, I had a discussion with the committee clerk, and we tried to find a date that would be convenient for everybody. Apparently, different caucuses have meetings on different dates, so we identified, fortunately, two dates that might be good for everybody. I have to ask people: would the members be available for a meeting September 11 or 13 from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m.?

Dr. Brown: Eleventh or 13th?

The Chair: Yeah.

Basically, I think that we could ask the officers to provide, like, 15 to 20 minutes of representation on their mandates followed by the same amount of time for questions from the committee. If we can schedule, say, 45 minutes for each officer, that's the kind of time we need.

Mr. McDonald: Can I suggest the 13th? The 11th does not work in my schedule.

Mrs. Leskiw: Doesn't work for me either.

The Chair: What about the 13th?

Mr. Wilson, the 13th is good?

Mr. Wilson: Yes.

The Chair: Okay. It seems we're in agreement. Our next meeting will be on September 13 from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Okay. If there is no other business, I would need a motion to adjourn the meeting.

Yes? Any questions?

Mr. Rogers: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. My apologies if I wasn't clear on the intent of how we will be handling this letter from the child advocate. Is that intended to be dealt with by the department?

The Chair: Yeah. At the next meeting.

Mr. Rogers: Oh. We're going to deal with that at the next meeting.

The Chair: Yeah. After they finish their presentation.

Mr. Rogers: Okay. Thank you very much.

The Chair: Okay. Would a member move a motion to adjourn the meeting? Mr. Eggen. All in favour? The motion is carried.

Okay. Thank you. See you next time.

[The committee adjourned at 2:02 p.m.]

