



Legislative Assembly of Alberta

The 29th Legislature
First Session

Standing Committee
on
Legislative Offices

Wednesday, February 17, 2016
1:08 p.m.

Transcript No. 29-1-5

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Standing Committee on Legislative Offices

Cortes-Vargas, Estefania, Strathcona-Sherwood Park (ND), Chair
Sweet, Heather, Edmonton-Manning (ND), Deputy Chair

Connolly, Michael R.D., Calgary-Hawkwood (ND)
Cooper, Nathan, Olds-Didsbury-Three Hills (W)
Ellis, Mike, Calgary-West (PC)*
Horne, Trevor A.R., Spruce Grove-St. Albert (ND)
Kleinsteuber, Jamie, Calgary-Northern Hills (ND)
Nixon, Jason, Rimbey-Rocky Mountain House-Sundre (W)
Shepherd, David, Edmonton-Centre (ND)
van Dijken, Glenn, Barrhead-Morinville-Westlock (W)
Woollard, Denise, Edmonton-Mill Creek (ND)
Vacant, Calgary-Greenway

* substitution for Calgary-Greenway

Legislative Officers

Jill Clayton	Information and Privacy Commissioner
Del Graff	Child and Youth Advocate
Peter Hourihan	Ombudsman, Public Interest Commissioner
Glen Resler	Chief Electoral Officer
Merwan Saher	Auditor General
Marguerite Trussler, QC	Ethics Commissioner

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Shannon Dean	Senior Parliamentary Counsel/ Director of House Services
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Stephanie LeBlanc	Legal Research Officer
Sarah Amato	Research Officer
Nancy Robert	Research Officer
Giovana Bianchi	Committee Clerk
Corinne Dacyshyn	Committee Clerk
Jody Rempel	Committee Clerk
Karen Sawchuk	Committee Clerk
Cheryl Scarlett	Director of Human Resources, Information Technology and Broadcast Services
Rhonda Sorensen	Manager of Corporate Communications and Broadcast Services
Jeanette Dotimas	Communications Consultant
Tracey Sales	Communications Consultant
Janet Schwegel	Managing Editor of <i>Alberta Hansard</i>

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[Cortes-Vargas in the chair]

The Chair: Hello, everyone. We're going to call this meeting to order. Welcome to this meeting of the Standing Committee on Legislative Offices. I'm Estefania Cortes-Vargas, MLA for Strathcona-Sherwood Park and chair of the committee.

I'd ask that all members and those joining the committee at the table introduce themselves for the record. I will call on the members joining the meeting via teleconference to introduce themselves, and at this point it's Mr. Connolly and Mr. Nixon. For the record I would also note that the substitution is Mr. Ellis for Mr. Bhullar.

The meeting agenda and the minutes were posted on the committee's internal website, but if anyone requires copies of these documents, please let our committee clerk know.

I'm just going to let everyone introduce themselves.

Ms Sweet: Good afternoon. Heather Sweet, MLA for Edmonton-Manning.

Mr. Cooper: Nathan Cooper, for the outstanding constituency of Olds-Didsbury-Three Hills.

Mr. van Dijken: Glenn van Dijken, Barrhead-Morinville-Westlock.

Mr. Ellis: Mike Ellis, Calgary-West.

Mrs. Scarlett: Cheryl Scarlett, director of human resources, information technology, and broadcast services.

Ms Woollard: Denise Woollard, MLA, Edmonton-Mill Creek.

Mr. Horne: Trevor Horne, MLA for Spruce Grove-St. Albert.

Mr. Kleinsteuber: Jamie Kleinsteuber, MLA for Calgary-Northern Hills.

Mr. Shepherd: David Shepherd, MLA, Edmonton-Centre.

Mr. Reynolds: Rob Reynolds, Law Clerk and director of inter-parliamentary relations.

Mrs. Sawchuk: Karen Sawchuk, committee clerk.

The Chair: I'm just going to call on the phones. We're still having a bit of technical difficulty, so I just want to check to make sure that they're able to communicate with us.

Mr. Nixon, are you there?

Mr. Nixon: I am here. I'm Jason Nixon, MLA for Rimbey-Rocky Mountain House-Sundre.

The Chair: Thank you.

Mr. Connolly.

Mr. Connolly: Michael Connolly, MLA for Calgary-Hawkwood.

The Chair: Okay. All right. Please jump in at any time if you need to be on the speakers list. Seeing as we can't be online, you're going to just need to be able to jump in for us to get any information to you. Things seem to be going okay technically. Okay. Perfect.

Before we turn to business at hand, we have a few operational items. The microphone consoles are operated by the *Hansard* staff. Please keep all cellphones and BlackBerrys on silent and off the tables as these can interfere with the audiofeed. Audio of the committee proceeding is streamed live on the Internet and recorded

by *Alberta Hansard*. Audio access and meeting transcripts are obtained via the Legislative Assembly website.

To move on to our agenda, I would like to address the audit contract for the Auditor General under today's business today, time permitting. Would a member move a motion to approve today's meeting agenda, please.

Mr. Cooper: So moved.

The Chair: Cooper moved. All those in favour? Opposed? Motion is carried.

Please note that the meeting location cited on the first page of the minutes from December 10 was incorrect and has been corrected, for those members who may have the first copy showing that the meeting location was in the Legislature Annex. Are there any other errors or omissions to note? Do I have any errors? On the phone? If not, would a member move to approve the December 10, 2015, minutes as revised. Mr. Horne. All those in favour? Opposed? Motion is carried.

Next are the minutes from December 11, 2015. Are there any errors or omissions to note? On the phone? If not, would a member move to approve the December 11, 2015, minutes as distributed.

Mr. Shepherd: So moved.

The Chair: Mr. Shepherd. All those in favour? Opposed? Motion is carried.

Just to be clear, over the phones we're going to need to hear a yes or a no, moving forward, if there are no objections in the previous ones. Thank you.

All right. I would call for the committee to move in camera for this item as the discussion relates to the individual officers and consideration of their respective positions and contracts. For the members' information, any decisions of the committee will be formalized by a motion once we return to the record. Would a member make a motion to move in camera, please. Denise Woollard. Thank you. All those in favour? Motion is carried. We'll just have a moment while everyone exits.

[The committee met in camera from 1:14 p.m. to 2:45 p.m.]

The Chair: Okay. We're back on the record, and I'd ask if a member would be willing to move a motion in respect of the term of the office of the Auditor General. Mr. Cooper.

Mr. Cooper: Thank you, Chair. I'd like to move a motion with respect to the term for the Auditor General. The motion would read: moved by Mr. Cooper that

the Standing Committee on Legislative Offices recommend to the Legislative Assembly that the Auditor General, Mr. Merwan Saher, be reappointed Auditor General for a two-year period commencing April 29, 2016.

The Chair: Thank you. Is there any discussion or questions on this motion? On the phone lines? Okay. Hearing none, I will call the question. All those in favour of the motion? Any opposed? Motion is carried.

I understand we have another motion. Ms Woollard.

Ms Woollard: I move that

the position reclassifications of the Chief Electoral Officer and the Ethics Commissioner be reviewed by the Standing Committee on Legislative Offices after the Select Special Ethics and Accountability Committee has completed its review of the relevant statutes and submitted its report.

The Chair: Is there any discussion or questions on the motion?

Mr. Ellis: When are we expecting the other committee's review to be completed?

The Chair: September.

Mr. Ellis: Okay.

Mr. Reynolds: The committee commenced its review in September 2015, and they have a year to complete it, so that's a long way of saying September 2016 unless their mandate is amended by the Assembly.

Mr. Ellis: Thank you, sir.

The Chair: Are there any other questions, comments? On the phone? I will call the question. All those in favour of the motion? Any opposed? Motion is carried.

On to other business. As I mentioned at the outset of our meeting, I want to address an information item for the committee. The committee is required by statute to contract with an independent auditor to complete an annual audit of the operations of the office

of the Auditor General. I will be signing the contract as committee chair as directed by a motion of this committee in 2014. I wish to bring this to the committee's attention. This the second and final year of the two-year extension granted to the firm St. Arnaud Pinsent Steman. Are there any questions in this respect?

Seeing none, if there are no other items for discussion at this time, then I'd call for a motion to adjourn the meeting.

Ms Woollard: We don't need a motion on this?

The Chair: No. It's just an item for discussion if you have any questions.

Mr. Kleinsteuber.

Mr. Kleinsteuber: Motion to adjourn.

The Chair: Okay. All in favour? Any opposed? Great. The meeting is adjourned.

[The committee adjourned at 2:49 p.m.]

