



Legislative Assembly of Alberta

The 29th Legislature
Second Session

Standing Committee
on
Legislative Offices

Child and Youth Advocate Act Review

Friday, November 4, 2016
9 a.m.

Transcript No. 29-2-3

**Legislative Assembly of Alberta
The 29th Legislature
Second Session**

Standing Committee on Legislative Offices

Shepherd, David, Edmonton-Centre (ND), Chair
Malkinson, Brian, Calgary-Currie (ND), Deputy Chair

Cooper, Nathan, Olds-Didsbury-Three Hills (W)
Ellis, Mike, Calgary-West (PC)
Horne, Trevor A.R., Spruce Grove-St. Albert (ND)
Jabbour, Deborah C., Peace River (ND)
Kleinsteuber, Jamie, Calgary-Northern Hills (ND)
Littlewood, Jessica, Fort Saskatchewan-Vegreville (ND)
Nixon, Jason, Rimbey-Rocky Mountain House-Sundre (W)
Pitt, Angela D., Airdrie (W)*
van Dijken, Glenn, Barrhead-Morinville-Westlock (W)
Woollard, Denise, Edmonton-Mill Creek (ND)

* substitution for Nathan Cooper

Support Staff

| | |
|------------------------|---|
| Robert H. Reynolds, QC | Clerk |
| Shannon Dean | Law Clerk and Director of House Services |
| Trafton Koenig | Parliamentary Counsel |
| Stephanie LeBlanc | Parliamentary Counsel |
| Philip Massolin | Manager of Research and Committee Services |
| Sarah Amato | Research Officer |
| Nancy Robert | Research Officer |
| Corinne Dacyshyn | Committee Clerk |
| Jody Rempel | Committee Clerk |
| Aaron Roth | Committee Clerk |
| Karen Sawchuk | Committee Clerk |
| 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> |

9 a.m.

Friday, November 4, 2016

[Mr. Shepherd in the chair]

The Chair: All right. Well, it's 9 a.m., so we'll call the meeting to order. I'd like to welcome our members, staff, and guests to this meeting of the Standing Committee on Legislative Offices. Of course, my name is David Shepherd, MLA for Edmonton-Centre and chair of the committee.

I'd ask that members and those joining the committee at the table introduce themselves for the record, starting to my right.

Mr. Malkinson: Thank you very much, Mr. Chair. Brian Malkinson, MLA for Calgary-Currie.

Ms Sales: Tracey Sales, communications services, Legislative Assembly Office.

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

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

Mrs. Littlewood: Good morning. Jessica Littlewood, MLA representing Fort Saskatchewan-Vegreville.

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

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

Dr. Amato: Hi. Sarah Amato, research officer, Legislative Assembly Office.

Dr. Massolin: Good morning. Philip Massolin, manager of research and committee services. Thank you.

Ms Dean: Good morning. Shannon Dean, Law Clerk and director of House services.

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

The Chair: On the phones? Mr. Ellis.

Mr. Ellis: Yeah. Mike Ellis, MLA, Calgary-West.

The Chair: Thank you.
Mr. Nixon.

Mr. Nixon: Yeah. Jason Nixon, MLA for Rimbey-Rocky Mountain House-Sundre.

The Chair: Thank you.
Ms Pitt.

Mrs. Pitt: Angela Pitt, MLA, Airdrie, sitting in for Nathan Cooper, Olds-Didsbury-Three Hills.

The Chair: Excellent. Thank you.

Ms Jabbour: And Debbie Jabbour, MLA, Peace River.

The Chair: Yes. Thank you, Ms Jabbour. My apologies.

For the record I'll note that Mrs. Pitt is the official substitute for Mr. Cooper.

Now, before we turn to the business at hand, just a few operational items. The microphone consoles are operated by the *Hansard* staff. Please keep cellphones and BlackBerrys on silent

and off the table as they can interfere with the audiofeed. The audio of the committee proceedings is streamed live on the Internet and recorded by *Alberta Hansard*. Audio access and meeting transcripts are obtained via the Legislative Assembly website.

To begin with our first order of business, then, that being the agenda, do I have a member that would like to move a motion to approve today's meeting agenda, please? Mr. Horne. Thank you. All in favour? On the phones? Thank you. Any opposed? Thank you. That motion is carried.

We have a set of draft minutes from the August 16, 2016, meeting that were distributed for consideration. Are there any errors or omissions? If not, I'd look for a motion to approve the minutes. Mr. Kleinsteuber. Any opposed to accepting the minutes from our last meeting? On the phones, anyone opposed? Thank you. That motion is carried.

On to our first order of business, then, the review of the Child and Youth Advocate Act. The communications update: as members will recall, the committee approved a rather comprehensive communications plan to increase awareness about our review of the Child and Youth Advocate Act and to invite submissions. Here to update us today is the communications team or a representative thereof. They've provided us with a communications measurement summary document for the various campaign initiatives. Do we have any questions regarding that document? Mr. Horne.

Mr. Horne: Yeah. I recall in our previous meeting that we discussed a particular interest in indigenous groups, and I noticed that there was not as much uptake as I would have hoped. Do you have any insight or any thoughts into why that is?

Ms Sales: Thank you for the question. I'm not sure what you mean by uptake. Could you clarify your question?

Mr. Horne: We didn't get as many responses as I would have hoped, so I'm wondering if there's any particular insight.

Ms Sales: Okay. It's always difficult to judge campaign success based on submissions. I think that this was a very personal topic to many people, so whether or not they choose to submit could be for a variety of reasons. I can tell you that we did target those groups through our radio campaign, through digital newspaper, and through online ads, which, through what we can measure, seem to have done quite successfully. We reached approximately 1.4 million Albertans. We had about 10,000 hits to our website during the campaign duration. I think that we did our job, which was to notify the public about the review and to encourage those who are interested in the topic to submit, but whether or not they choose to submit I think is a very personal decision. I don't feel comfortable commenting on why they may or may not have chosen to do so.

Mr. Horne: Okay.

The Chair: Thank you.

Any other members have questions regarding the summary of the communications initiative campaign?

All right. If not, then we can move on. Research services and the written submissions summary: at our last meeting we also directed research services to prepare a summary of the written submissions that we received regarding the Child and Youth Advocate Act. I am going to invite Dr. Amato to give us a brief overview of this document, but before I do, I just want to quickly remind everyone about the sensitivity of the information that was provided in these documents and the confidentiality we agreed to provide. If you are referring to a specific submission, it may be best in some cases to

identify it by its record number, which is located in the top right-hand corner of each submission.

Does anyone have any concerns with that process? Excellent. In that case, I will turn the floor over to Dr. Amato.

Dr. Amato: Hi. Good morning. I'd be pleased to provide a summary. Hopefully, everyone has the summary of submissions document. To begin, I'd just like to correct a mistake in the document, in the introduction. The total number of submissions was in fact 64 submissions, and the breakdown of those submissions, in fact – again I'm correcting a mistake that I made – was 32 submissions from stakeholders, and the same number, 32 submissions, from members of the public.

Please also note that two stakeholders and seven members of the public requested that their submissions remain confidential. The names of those stakeholders and those individuals do not appear in the document.

As expected, the briefing contains a summary of major issues identified in the submission. Perhaps I can draw your attention to the overview on page 2, which summarizes those submissions. Here you find major issues grouped into eight categories, and I'll just go through those categories and provide a little bit of detail about each.

The first category, the first heading, is Age Limits. Submissions in that category discuss changing the age limits under the act, and that's quite a lengthy discussion.

The second major heading is Scope of Designated Services to Children and Youth. Here submissions discuss a variety of suggestions, including, for example, expanding the jurisdiction of the office of the Child and Youth Advocate to include mental health services, family supports for children with disabilities, and health services. They also discuss, as an example, expanding the act to include the Protection of Children Abusing Drugs Act and the Education Act; the provision of services for indigenous children, immigrant children, and the children of immigrants, specifically young children; and services for youth in the youth criminal justice system.

Under the third heading you'll find a discussion of the role and powers of the advocate. Here submissions discuss, for example, the ways the role of the advocate might be informed by the report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission; legal representation for children and youth; the office of the advocate's research capacity; and, as another example, the relationship between the OCYA, the office of the Child and Youth Advocate, and child and family services.

The fourth major category is investigations. The majority of submissions here discuss amending the definition of serious injury under the act.

The fifth category is postinvestigation reports. Here you'll find submissions making suggestions with respect to the content of reports after investigations, the ways reports are released and distributed, and lots of suggestions on implementing the recommendations of the advocate's reports.

The sixth major heading discusses a variety of administrative matters, from oaths to records management, transparency in the OCYA, amongst the variety of administrative matters that are discussed there, important administrative matters, I should add.

The seventh category is protection of information.

The eighth category is other suggestions and comments. Again, submissions grouped in this category contain a number of suggestions, including suggestions with respect to the rights of parents and guardians as well as additional suggestions relating to expanding the jurisdiction of the advocate.

9:10

You'll also note that on the very first page in the introduction there are a variety of requests for presentations, and there are also a number of people who in their submissions said that they'd be very happy to come and present to the committee should the committee request. I note that on the agenda that's going to be discussed under item 4(c), and I'm happy to answer any questions with respect to that should anyone have some.

Thank you very much for listening.

The Chair: Excellent. Well, thank you, Dr. Amato.

Do any members have questions for Dr. Amato on that brief overview?

Mr. Kleinsteuber: I've got one. Dr. Amato, I was wondering if you noticed any differences between the public or private citizen submissions and the stakeholder submissions in terms of themes, maybe.

Dr. Amato: That's a difficult question for me to answer. I think the way in which, in general, everyone answered, stakeholders and members of the public, was from the ways in which they interact with vulnerable children and youth and with the office of the Child and Youth Advocate. That's true both for the stakeholders and in some cases for members of the public. You will find that there were some members of the public who responded who were former social workers or are currently social workers or are currently youth workers or perhaps have children who have interacted with child and family services or perhaps themselves as children and youths interacted with child and family services.

The difference is experience and professional experience, whether they're nonprofit organizations that advocate on behalf of children or worked directly with vulnerable children and youth. It all depends on the ways and the jobs or the experiences that people are having.

I hope that answers your question, but that would be the way in which I would answer.

Mr. Kleinsteuber: Okay. Thanks.

The Chair: Any other members have questions for Dr. Amato? On the phone, any questions?

If not, then, we can move on to our next item of business. In terms of considering additional presentations, before we move on to inviting presentations, there are a few issues that need to be dealt with regarding a handful of written submissions that were provided to the committee. First of all, we received three of the submissions after the advertised due date of October 14, those being: 27(a), that being a second submission from the Greater St. Albert Roman Catholic Schools; submission 63, from Kasohkewew Child Wellness Society; and submission 64, from the Alberta School Boards Association. Is it the will of the committee that these submissions be included in our review of the Child and Youth Advocate Act? If so, I'd look for someone to move a motion in that regard.

Mrs. Littlewood: I would make a motion to accept the submissions that came after the October 14, 2016, deadline. I would move something similar to that

the Standing Committee on Legislative Offices include all written submissions received by November 3, 2016, as part of its review of the Child and Youth Advocate Act unless directed otherwise by the committee.

The Chair: Okay. We have a motion on the floor. Any questions, discussion?

Hearing none, I'll call the question. All those in favour of the motion as proposed, to accept the submissions that were received after the deadline? Okay. On the phones? Thank you. Any opposed? That motion is carried.

Now, the committee also needs to make a decision regarding a written submission that was distributed in confidence on October 31, 2016, to our committee members only. Now, this submission raises some concerns, both with respect to the very personal information that it includes about third parties, including a minor, and whether or not it even falls within the scope of this committee's review. As a committee we do have the option of excluding any submissions from the review process that we feel are not appropriate, and this discretion has been exercised by other committees in the past.

If members feel the need to discuss this in detail, we can choose to go in camera, but for the time being I'll open the floor. Do any members have thoughts or questions on this?

Mrs. Littlewood: Given the sensitive nature of the submission I would seek thoughts on potentially going in camera to discuss this so that we don't reveal personal information about anyone that submitted.

The Chair: Okay. So, Mrs. Littlewood, you're moving a motion, then, to go in camera?

Mrs. Littlewood: I would be open to hearing what other members of the committee would like to do, such as Mr. van Dijken.

The Chair: Okay. So just inviting additional discussion. Understood. Any members?

Mr. van Dijken: I don't have any issue with that, going in camera. I don't have anything that I believe I would submit where it would be necessary to go in camera, but if the wish of the committee is to go in camera, I would agree that that would be okay by me.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. van Dijken.

Ms Woollard: I have no opposition to going in camera. I would probably suggest that given the nature and the content of that document we will likely exclude it no matter what, but if people want to talk about it further.

The Chair: All right. So we have two options in front of us. One, a member can move a motion to take this discussion in camera. Or, alternatively, a member can make a motion as to whether or not we accept the document. I'll open it up to members to make a decision if they'd like to make a motion in either of those regards.

Mr. Ellis: I think we should go in camera. I have a few comments I'd like to say in regard to that document.

The Chair: Okay. Mr. Ellis has moved a motion that the committee go in camera to discuss this issue. All in favour? Any opposed? All right. That motion is carried.

[The committee met in camera from 9:17 a.m. to 9:28 a.m.]

The Chair: We're back on the record.
Ms Woollard.

Ms Woollard: Thank you, Chair. I would move that

the Standing Committee on Legislative Offices exclude the written submission distributed to committee members on October 31, 2016, from the review of the Child and Youth Advocate Act.

The Chair: Thank you, Ms Woollard.

Any questions, discussion from members?

If not, I'll call the question. All those in favour of the motion to exclude the submission from our consideration, say aye. On the phones? Any opposed? That motion is carried.

We'll move on, then, to item 5, audit of the office of the Auditor General. Now, for the audit of the office of the Auditor General – say that five times fast – I'm pleased to advise committee members . . . [interjections] Oh, I apologize. I missed a portion of my agenda there. I skipped a page. Allow me to back up here.

So we are on item (c), decision items, inviting additional presentations. We did discuss – let's see here – the written submission on October 31.

All right. With those decisions made, let's move on, then, to discuss whether or not we have a need to invite additional presentations as part of our review. Do members have any thoughts on additional presentations that we may wish to invite? So this would be when we return for our meeting in January, the opportunity for oral presentations, where we can ask some questions and get further information. Mrs. Littlewood.

Mrs. Littlewood: Thank you. I think that it is important that we have a wide range of groups represented while we discuss this, so I will start with a few that I believe would be very useful when discussing youth that interact with the act. I will suggest the Boyle Street Community Services, the Red Deer Youth & Volunteer Centre, the Elk Island youth ranch, and iHuman Youth.

The Chair: Thank you, Mrs. Littlewood.

Mrs. Littlewood: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

The Chair: Mr. Malkinson.

Mr. Malkinson: Thank you very much, Chair. I would also like to invite some groups to come to submit, specifically from the justice field. I think it would be worth while to invite the city of Calgary youth and justice services, who made a submission. As well, it makes sense to invite Justice and Solicitor General.

The Chair: Okay. Thank you, Mr. Malkinson.

I will give an opportunity for members on the phones. Anyone on the phones wish to make any comments on those suggested or suggest any additional presentations?

Hearing none, I'll return to the room.

Ms Woollard: In terms of education I'd like to suggest that we invite the Alberta School Boards Association and the Boyle Street Education Centre for two.

The Chair: Thank you, Ms Woollard.

Mr. Kleinsteuber.

Mr. Kleinsteuber: Yes. Thank you. I'd like to suggest a few as well. From government I think it would be reasonable to bring in the office of the Child and Youth Advocate and the Ministry of Human Services. As well, I'd like to suggest from people with disabilities the Premier's Council on the Status of Persons with Disabilities, from the Department of Health likely Alberta Health Services as well as from worker advocacy the Alberta College of Social Workers.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Kleinsteuber.

Again, just an opportunity. Does anyone on the phones have comment on any of the suggestions made so far or wish to suggest any additional presentations?

Ms Jabbour: Yeah. Sorry. I wasn't aware we were naming these all out individually. I've got a few indigenous submissions here that I would like to see come in.

The Chair: Certainly.

Ms Jabbour: The Kasohkewew Child Wellness Society, the Edmonton Native Friendship Centre, the Creating Hope Society, Siksika First Nation healing centre, and Bob Cardinal, who is an elder for Enoch Cree.

The Chair: Thank you, Ms Jabbour.
Go ahead, Mr. Ellis.

Mr. Ellis: Chair, would it be possible to invite Legal Aid? I think they have a large part in that.

The Chair: Certainly. Thank you, Mr. Ellis. We'll add that to the list.

Mr. Horne.

Mr. Horne: Yeah. There are a few community groups that submitted that I think would be great to get some feedback from. In particular – I'm going to butcher the pronunciation of this – the Tacalusa Institute and the John Humphrey Centre for Peace and Human Rights. I believe they both work with some immigrant populations, and that's an important perspective to get. Also, there was Align, who had a different perspective from a lot of the other submissions, and the Alberta child care association as well.

9:35

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Horne.

Okay. Any other members have any comments, questions, thoughts on the organizations and individuals that have been proposed or wish to propose any additional?

Mrs. Pitt: I would like to make some suggestions.

The Chair: Certainly. Go ahead, Mrs. Pitt.

Mrs. Pitt: AARC, the Alberta Adolescent Recovery Centre, Little Warriors and the Be Brave Ranch, child and family services, and the boys and girls club.

The Chair: Thank you, Mrs. Pitt. I'll just give the clerk a moment to get all that.

Excellent. Any other members on the phone wish to make any suggestions or have any thoughts or comments? Additionally, anyone else in the room?

All right. I think we've got a fairly substantive list together here. Would members like to review the list that we have, then, before we look at a motion to accept? Why don't we do that.

Clerk, if you could just read through the list of presenters we have.

Ms Rempel: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I hope I will be corrected if I have missed anyone. We have Boyle Street Community Services, Red Deer Youth & Volunteer Centre, Elk Island youth ranch, iHuman Youth, city of Calgary youth and justice services, Justice and Solicitor General, Alberta School Boards Association, Boyle Street Education Centre, the office of the Child and Youth

Advocate, Ministry of Human Services, Premier's Council on the Status of Persons with Disabilities, Alberta Health Services, worker advocacy, Alberta College of Social Workers.

Mr. Malkinson: I think it was Mr. Kleinsteuber who proposed this. I think it's just the Alberta College of Social Workers, which is a worker advocacy group.

Ms Rempel: Okay.

Mr. Malkinson: Feel free to correct me, Mr. Kleinsteuber, if I got that wrong.

Mr. Kleinsteuber: No. That's quite correct. Thank you.

The Chair: Thank you.

Ms Rempel: The Kasohkewew Child Wellness Society, the Edmonton Native Friendship Centre, Creating Hope Society, the Siksika centre, Bob Cardinal from the Enoch First Nation, Legal Aid, the Tacalusa Institute, John Humphrey centre, and Alberta child care association.

Mr. Horne: There's also Align in there. They had made a submission.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Horne.

Ms Rempel: Alberta Adolescent Recovery Centre, Little Warriors and Be Brave Ranch, child and family services, and the boys and girls club.

The Chair: Thank you, Clerk.

All right. Do any members have any further questions, discussion, groups they'd like to add? Or would a member like to move a motion, then, to accept that list of presenters for invitation in January?

Mrs. Pitt: I just have a question.

The Chair: Yes. Go ahead, Mrs. Pitt.

Mrs. Pitt: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Firstly, would it be – and I'm not going to make this as a suggestion unless the committee agrees. I know we have the School Boards Association, but perhaps maybe the school boards themselves? If there's agreement on that, I'd like to add it to the list. If not, the School Boards Association will suffice.

The Chair: Okay. Mrs. Pitt is asking, I guess, if we'd be interested in inviting individual school boards. Mr. Horne, I saw your hand.

Mr. Horne: Yeah. I'm not necessarily opposed. My concern is that if we start inviting in individual school boards, we'll quickly get a few other school boards who may or may not have submitted who start coming forward and then we'll quickly balloon our number of presentations. So just something to consider.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Horne.

Any other members have thoughts, comments on inviting individual school boards?

Ms Jabbour: I don't know. I was sort of just thinking I would add a couple of suggestions related to associations and groups, so I wonder: do we operate on the assumption that the association speaks on behalf of the boards or would communicate this through the boards? I kind of also agree that maybe we're going to, you know, end up with a lot of people that – I don't know. It just could

be opening it up a bit too wide although I do think it's a great suggestion because individual boards would have different perspectives, for sure.

The Chair: Okay. Thank you, Ms Jabbour.

Ms Woollard: I also think there's a really good point to it, but the trouble is that, as other people have said, if we are going to invite one board, I think we'd have to invite them all, and if we're looking at all the school boards in Alberta, we're looking at a substantial number. If many of them wanted to come and present, we would be looking at a lengthy, lengthy procedure. So just on the basis of sheer volume I would think maybe it's not workable.

The Chair: Okay. Thank you, Ms Woollard.

Mr. Malkinson: Just a question for Mrs. Pitt, who brought this up. Perhaps a way to do this would be if there's a specific school board that you had in mind who maybe had expressed interest to you to come in and present. I don't think I would have any problem with that if there is a specific school board that would be interested in coming in. But to sum up the point in the room, sort of doing a blanket inviting everyone, you might get a lot of school boards that have similar concerns that wouldn't already be addressed through the School Boards Association that we've invited already. Is there perhaps some specific school board or school boards that you had in mind?

Mrs. Pitt: No, no. Not particularly. I would rather do a blanket school board submission and maybe just one, but I wouldn't be opposed to that either. I'm totally fine with the association representing the school boards. I just thought I'd throw it out there as a suggestion, but not an official suggestion for this list. So if it's the will of this committee, the School Boards Association will suffice.

The Chair: Thank you, Mrs. Pitt.

Mr. van Dijken: In consideration of the direction of the invitation to the school boards in particular, it appears that there's a will to have the School Boards Association report on behalf of the school boards. I think it might be appropriate for the chair of this committee to possibly have communications with the School Boards Association and encourage them to reach out to their members to present to the School Boards Association any insight they might have.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. van Dijken. So your suggestion, then, is that the committee, through myself as chair, in inviting the School Boards Association, ask them to poll their members, collect that data, and bring that before the committee?

Mr. van Dijken: Yeah. That would be accurate. I think that allows all boards to provide insight that they might have. As Ms Jabbour had indicated, each board will bring a different value to that insight. To receive a submission where the School Boards Association then speaks on behalf of its members would be a way to manage the volume of presentations that we might be inviting in.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. van Dijken.
Mr. Horne.

Mr. Horne: Yeah. Just as a question of clarification, I seem to recall that we had reached out to the school boards individually or that there was a communication either from the ASBA or from us to them.

Dr. Amato: My recollection is that there was a communication from ASBA to the school boards, and that is indeed reflected in the submission, so you'll find that a number of school boards from across the province responded. Again, you know, why certain school boards chose to respond as opposed to others, that I can't comment on, but I suppose it's a choice.

Mr. Horne: Okay. In that light, I would still be open to the chair reaching out to the ASBA and asking if they would be open to collecting further feedback from the school boards.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Horne.

9:45

Ms Jabbour: I like that suggestion as well. I was going to suggest contacting the boards and asking if they wanted to go through the association, but I think that the suggestion by Mr. van Dijken is less work. Then the board could just, you know, have that conversation and then share it back. Through the association all relevant associations would be included should they want to, so that makes sense.

The Chair: Thank you, Ms Jabbour.

To counsel, then: in making a motion, will we need to specifically identify that that was the will of the committee, or would we simply make the motion to accept all of them?

Ms Dean: I don't think that's necessary, Mr. Chair. I mean, I think you've got some direction in composing the invitation. On your behalf the committee clerk will reflect that.

The Chair: Thank you, Ms Dean. That being the case, do we have a member that would like to move a motion, then, in regard to the list of submissions?

Ms Jabbour: Can I just pop in and add two more that I just thought of to invite?

The Chair: Certainly.

Ms Jabbour: That would be the College of Alberta Psychologists and the Psychologists' Association.

The Chair: Thank you, Ms Jabbour.

Ms Rempel: Mr. Chair, could we get that second one again, please?

Ms Jabbour: The Alberta Psychologists' Association.

Ms Woollard: Can I just interrupt? I think you'll find it listed under Psychologists' Association of Alberta, PAA.

Ms Jabbour: Thank you, Denise.

The Chair: Excellent. All right. If there are no further additions or suggestions, is there a member who would like to move a motion in regard to the list of presenters to invite? Ms Woollard.

Ms Woollard: Sure. I'd be happy to make a motion that the Standing Committee on Legislative Offices invite the listed organizations and individuals to make an oral presentation to the committee as part of the review of the Child and Youth Advocate Act.

The Chair: Thank you, Ms Woollard.

We have a motion on the floor, then, to invite the list that we went through. Any questions, comments, concerns?

If not, I'll put the question to the floor. All members in favour of extending the invitation to the organizations and individuals listed earlier, say aye. Any opposed? That motion is carried.

All right. The other decision item we need to deal with today is the public posting of the written submissions we've received. Now, when we advertised the invitation to provide submissions, we gave submitters the option to request that their input remain confidential. That means that the following nine submissions will be kept confidential: submissions 5, 8, 20, 22, 25, 28, 46, 52, and 53. We also indicated that for submissions from the members of the public, names of submitters and any third-party personal information would be withheld. It's also a committee practice that signatures and personal contact information be removed before submissions are posted publicly. Is it the will of the committee that the written submissions for the review of the Child and Youth Advocate Act be posted on the public website using those guidelines?

Mr. Kleinsteuber.

Mr. Kleinsteuber: Yes. I'd like to make a motion to that effect.

The Chair: Okay. Thank you, Mr. Kleinsteuber.

Mr. Kleinsteuber has moved that

we post the submissions we've received on the public website using the guidelines that were stated.

Any members have comments, questions, concerns on that motion? Mrs. Littlewood.

Mrs. Littlewood: I would just like to say, Mr. Chair, that I think that at the last meeting we did a really good job around the table talking about the specifics of how the communication went out, so I think that this does a sufficient job and that all of the issues that people had around confidentiality were addressed.

Thank you.

The Chair: Thank you, Mrs. Littlewood.

All right. Any other members?

If not, I will call the question. All those in favour of the motion to take the submissions that we've accepted and post them on the public website according to the guidelines we've determined as a committee, say aye. Any opposed? That motion is carried.

All right. Now, moving on to where I mistakenly tried to jump a bit too early, the audit of the office of the Auditor General. At least I had practice in saying it. An update on our contract with the external auditor: I'm pleased to advise committee members that as agreed to back in August, we've made arrangements to have the firm of St. Arnaud Pinsent Steman perform the audit of the office of the Auditor General for the 2016-17 fiscal year.

In regard to the contract audit of the office of the Auditor General, at our last meeting the committee passed a motion to issue a request for proposal to accounting firms with regard to auditing the office of the Auditor General. However, after considering the requirements for an RFP, Parliamentary Counsel has indicated that because the scope of the work is already defined in this matter, it would actually be a request for quotation, or an RFQ, that we would be putting out as a committee. Do any members have concerns with going with an RFQ as opposed to an RFP? Any questions, thoughts, comments? Mr. Malkinson.

Mr. Malkinson: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Having sort of been involved in the process with you, I think that if counsel says that it's indeed a request for quotation, I think that would be the best approach for the committee to follow through with, and I think it matches the will of the committee, that we had talked about previously.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Malkinson.

Any other members have thoughts, comments, questions? Do we need to make a motion in this regard? There's not a motion required. Excellent. We will then allow counsel to proceed with the RFQ, and we'll update the committee when we're ready for the next steps on that issue.

Item 6, officers of the Legislative Assembly. The next items on the agenda deal with the officers' contracts and positions. It is customary for the committee to go in camera when discussing matters of this nature. Of course, we would need a member to make a motion to do so. Is there anyone who would like to make a motion to take the committee in camera?

Ms Woollard: I move that the Standing Committee on Legislative Offices move in camera for the next portion of the agenda.

The Chair: Thank you, Ms Woollard.

I'll call the question. All those in favour of moving the committee in camera, say aye. On the phones? Any opposed? That motion is carried. The committee will go in camera.

[The committee met in camera from 9:52 a.m. to 11:05 a.m.]

The Chair: All right. We are back on the record.

I believe we have some members who would like to propose some motions, beginning with the officers' 2016 salary review. Would anyone care to make a motion on that? Mrs. Littlewood.

Mrs. Littlewood: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I would like to move that the Standing Committee on Legislative Offices adopt a compensation strategy parallel with that provided to public service management employees, which includes no scheduled increases or movement within salary grids for 2016-2017.

The Chair: Thank you, Mrs. Littlewood.

Do any members have comments or questions on the proposed motion?

Mr. van Dijken: I just have a question with regard to the wording of the motion. We're adopting a compensation strategy, so for 2016-17 we're adopting the strategy for this point in time. I think the strategy that's been over a period of time is that we are parallel with public service management. I guess possibly it should be worded to "adopt a compensation strategy for 2016-2017 parallel with that provided to public service management." Then it identifies it as being for this period of time. I might just not be reading it correctly, but that's what it says to me.

The Chair: Yes. Thank you, Mr. van Dijken. My understanding is that that's the meaning and intent of what has been written, stating that we would "adopt a compensation strategy parallel with that provided to public service management employees" and then describing what that strategy actually is, stating that it is a strategy "which includes no scheduled increases or movement within salary grids for 2016-2017." So it's indicating that that is the strategy for the public service in 2016-17, that there be no movement in the pay grids, and then saying that we are adopting the same strategy for the legislative officers. I'm not sure if that it clarifies or not.

Mr. van Dijken: Oh, yeah. Fair enough.

The Chair: Okay. Thank you, Mr. van Dijken.

Any other thoughts or questions, then?

If not, I'll call the question. All members in favour of the motion, say aye. On the phones? Any opposed? That motion is carried.

A motion, then, in regard to the position consideration for the Information and Privacy Commissioner?

Ms Woollard: Aren't we looking at reclassification?

The Chair: Oh, I apologize. Thank you, Ms Woollard, for reminding me. Yes, I did miss that there. Pardon me.

Let's back up, then, and take a look at the question of reclassification. Mr. Horne, you had a motion on that?

Mr. Horne: Yes, I did. I would like to move that the Standing Committee on Legislative Offices confirm that the positions of Ethics Commissioner and Chief Electoral Officer be classified within schedule C of the senior officials salary schedule for the public service of Alberta.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Horne.

We have the motion on the floor. Any members have thoughts, comments, questions?

If not, then I will call the question. All in favour of the motion as proposed by Mr. Horne? On the phones? Thank you. Any opposed? That motion is carried.

To the final question, then, of the recommendation for the reappointment of the Information and Privacy Commissioner. Do we have a motion? Ms Woollard.

Ms Woollard: Yes. I'd like to move that the Standing Committee on Legislative Offices recommend to the Legislative Assembly that Ms Jill Clayton be reappointed Information and Privacy Commissioner for a five-year period commencing February 1, 2017.

The Chair: Thank you, Ms Woollard.

We have the motion on the floor. Any questions, comments, concerns?

Hearing none, I'll call the question. All those in favour of the motion put forward by Ms Woollard, say aye. And on the phones? Any opposed? That motion is carried. Thank you.

We have one item remaining under other business, which is attendance at the 2016 Council on Governmental Ethics Laws conference, generally referred to as the COGEL conference. As committee members may recall, this committee has previously sent representatives to this conference for many years; however, last fall it was determined that we would not participate in the 2015 conference. This year the conference is from December 11 to 14 in New Orleans.

Does anyone have any thoughts on how the committee should proceed regarding this conference this year?

Mr. Kleinsteuber: Well, I'd have to say that given the current economic climate, as has been the theme throughout the meeting, I think, I would encourage that we not incur the expenses, if it can be avoided at this time, in order to save taxpayers money.

The Chair: Okay. Thank you, Mr. Kleinsteuber.

Anyone else have thoughts, comments on attendance at the COGEL conference? Mr. van Dijken.

Mr. van Dijken: Yeah. Is this a membership-driven organization or – I guess my question is: the deliberations and the information that could be obtained from the conference, is that something that can be accessed? Do they document deliberations and presentations, or is it not publicly distributed after the conference?

Ms Rempel: I don't know for certain the answer to that. I don't believe that the deliberations are, but some of the materials might be. I'd be happy to get you an answer for the next meeting.

Mr. van Dijken: Yeah. I would appreciate that. I've been to many different conferences that produce a document after the conference is done with all relevant presentations that have been submitted by individuals and organizations. If that information is available for us to peruse after the fact, I think that would be helpful. I would not encourage participation necessarily at this time, in light of our circumstances, but I would appreciate if there was the ability to get information from the conference.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. van Dijken.

Any other further thoughts or comments? Go ahead, Mr. Ellis.

Mr. Ellis: Have we had regular attendance at that conference, I guess number one, and does anybody know what the advantages or disadvantages are to us of not being there? I'm just curious.

The Chair: My understanding, Mr. Ellis, is that last year was the first year that members of the committee did not attend, but perhaps the clerk would like to provide some further clarification.

Ms Rempel: Yes, that's correct. We have been sending committee members to this conference regularly for many, many years. Last year was the first year that the committee chose not to send any representation. The committee has been involved in the past, of course, because of their ties to the various legislative officers. A lot of representatives from a lot of those various offices attend this conference as well. If that addresses your question.

11:15

Mr. Ellis: So with our nonattendance last year, would you say that there was – did we miss out on something? Would you say that? I mean, could they just send, you know, a PowerPoint presentation to us? Is there a disadvantage to us not being there? I get all the economic things, the economic climate factors. But, I mean, if every other jurisdiction is sending somebody but us and we're missing out on something, I'd just like to know what we're missing out on.

The Chair: Dr. Massolin, do you have a comment?

Dr. Massolin: Perhaps I can add something to the discussion by just referring members to the conference schedule, which is posted on the committee website. You can see the types of presentations that you have there. I would summarize the presentations as being heavily focussed on ethics and government, and there's even a bit on campaign financing and democracy generally, but there are many, many offerings, obviously. It's a very full conference. In terms of, you know, what you're looking for, in terms of the information you need to receive, the conference sessions you would attend, I think you'd get a good sense from just reading that schedule.

Thank you.

Mr. Ellis: Thank you very much.

The Chair: Thank you, Dr. Massolin.

Any other further thoughts, questions, comments? Mr. Horne.

Mr. Horne: Yeah. I looked over the schedule previously, and I was interested to note that for a lot of the topics there's lots of public information available on them, on those topics, if anybody's interested. I studied a lot of those topics, so if you're looking for some readings in that direction, I can certainly make some recommendations. But given the economic climate I'm not certain if it's prudent to be sending people to this conference.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Horne.

Any other further thoughts or comments? Go ahead, Ms. Woollard.

Ms Woollard: I really like the fact that there are so many sessions dealing with ethics in government. I think that's really important.

The Chair: Okay. Any other further thoughts or comments?

Ms Jabbour: I just wanted to make a comment. You know, I'm accepting the will of the committee regarding this. But it's been my experience that conference attendance can have a lot of benefits not just to the individual going there but, you know, it's two parts: what we bring to the conference, what it allows other people to see about us and our province and how we're doing things, as well as what we learn. So there can be a lot of benefits. It's not always just broken down to financial matters. I just wanted to toss that out there. I get the finances right now, the way they are, but I think we have to not just discount conferences based simply on that.

The Chair: Thank you, Ms Jabbour.

Any other further thoughts or comments?

If not, I'll ask if there's a member that would like to move a motion. Mr. Kleinsteuber.

Mr. Kleinsteuber: Okay. I'd like to move a motion along the lines that

the Standing Committee on Legislative Offices not send delegates to participate in the 2016 Council on Governmental Ethics Laws conference.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Kleinsteuber.

We have a motion on the floor, then, that we not send members of the committee to attend this conference. Any questions, discussions on the motion?

If not, I'll call the question. All those in favour, say aye. On the phones? Any opposed? That motion is carried.

The next meeting has been scheduled for December 2, 2016. This will be an all-day meeting to consider the budget estimates of each of the officers.

Aside from that, I think we've covered all of our business here today, so do we have a member that would move a motion to adjourn? Ms Woollard has moved that the committee adjourn. All those in favour? Any opposed? This meeting is adjourned.

Enjoy your weekend.

[The committee adjourned at 11:19 a.m.]

