



Legislative Assembly of Alberta

The 30th Legislature
First Session

Standing Committee
on
Legislative Offices

Wednesday, December 4, 2019
6:15 p.m.

Transcript No. 30-1-3

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Standing Committee on Legislative Offices

Ellis, Mike, Calgary-West (UCP), Chair
Schow, Joseph R., Cardston-Siksika (UCP), Deputy Chair

Goodridge, Laila, Fort McMurray-Lac La Biche (UCP)
Gray, Christina, Edmonton-Mill Woods (NDP)
Lovely, Jacqueline, Camrose (UCP)
Nixon, Jeremy P., Calgary-Klein (UCP)
Rutherford, Brad, Leduc-Beaumont (UCP)
Schmidt, Marlin, Edmonton-Gold Bar (NDP)
Shepherd, David, Edmonton-City Centre (NDP)
Sigurdson, R.J., Highwood (UCP)
Sweet, Heather, Edmonton-Manning (NDP)

Legislative Officers

Jill Clayton	Information and Privacy Commissioner
Del Graff	Child and Youth Advocate
Glen Resler	Chief Electoral Officer, Election Commissioner
Marianne Ryan	Ombudsman, Public Interest Commissioner
Marguerite Trussler, QC	Ethics Commissioner
W. Doug Wylie	Auditor General

Support Staff

Shannon Dean	Clerk
Stephanie LeBlanc	Clerk Assistant and Senior Parliamentary Counsel
Teri Cherkewich	Law Clerk
Trafton Koenig	Parliamentary Counsel
Philip Massolin	Clerk of Committees and Research Services
Sarah Amato	Research Officer
Nancy Robert	Research Officer
Michael Kulicki	Committee Clerk
Jody Rempel	Committee Clerk
Aaron Roth	Committee Clerk
Karen Sawchuk	Committee Clerk
Rhonda Sorensen	Manager of Corporate Communications
Jeanette Dotimas	Communications Consultant
Tracey Sales	Communications Consultant
Janet Schwegel	Managing Editor of <i>Alberta Hansard</i>

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[Mr. Ellis in the chair]

The Chair: All right. Ladies and gentlemen, good evening. Call to order. I'd like to welcome members, staff, and guests to the meeting of the Standing Committee on Legislative Offices. My name is Mike Ellis, MLA for Calgary-West and chair of the committee. I'd ask that members and those joining the committee at the table introduce themselves for the record. We'll start to my right, please.

Mr. Schow: Joseph Schow, Cardston-Siksika.

Ms Goodridge: Laila Goodridge, Fort McMurray-Lac La Biche.

Mr. Rutherford: Brad Rutherford, Leduc-Beaumont.

Mr. Sigurdson: R.J. Sigurdson, Highwood.

Ms Lovely: Jackie Lovely, constituency of Camrose.

Ms Gray: Christina Gray, MLA for Edmonton-Mill Woods.

Mr. Schmidt: Marlin Schmidt, Edmonton-Gold Bar.

Ms Sweet: Heather Sweet, Edmonton-Manning.

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

Ms Robert: Good evening. Nancy Robert, research officer.

Dr. Massolin: Good evening. Philip Massolin, clerk of committees and research services.

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

The Chair: I'm sorry. We have one more.

Mr. Jeremy Nixon: Jeremy Nixon, Calgary-Klein.

The Chair: Wonderful. Thank you so much. Nobody teleconferencing in. There don't appear to be any substitutions. Before we turn to the business at hand, a few operational items. Please note that the microphones are operated by *Hansard*. Committee proceedings are being live streamed on the Internet and broadcast on Alberta Assembly TV. Please set your cellphones and other devices to silent for the duration of the meeting.

We'll next move to the agenda. A draft agenda has been made available to the committee members. Would anyone like to propose any amendments? Seeing none, would a member like to move the motion to approve today's agenda as circulated? Okay. I see Ms Goodridge. Ms Goodridge would move that the December 4th, 2019, meeting agenda of the Standing Committee on Legislative Offices be approved as circulated. All in favour, say aye. Any opposed? Hearing none, that is unanimous and the motion is carried.

We'll next move to number 3. That's the approval of the minutes. Minutes from our last meeting were also distributed for consideration. Are there any errors or omissions to note? If not, would a member like to move that motion?

Mr. Schow: So moved, Chair.

The Chair: Okay. Mr. Schow would move that the minutes of the November 29th, 2019, meeting of the Standing Committee on Legislative Offices be approved as distributed. All in favour? Any opposed? Hearing none, that motion is carried and unanimous.

All right. Next we'll move to item number 4. That's the review of the 2018-19 OCYA annual report. Mandate: Government Motion 40. So I'll read this out for everybody. As we begin our review, I remind everyone that a revised version of the 2018-19 office of the Child and Youth Advocate annual report was tabled in the Assembly this afternoon. For the convenience of committee members this report is posted on the main page of the internal committee website. As we go through the review process, please ensure that you are referring to the current version of the report, which includes today's date and two appendices. To clarify our mandate regarding the review of this report, I would like to read Government Motion 40, which was agreed to on November 27, 2019, into the record for the benefit of all committee members.

Be it resolved that:

1. The 2018-2019 annual report of the office of the Child and Youth Advocate be referred to the Standing Committee on Legislative Offices for review;
2. The committee may, without leave of the Assembly, sit during a period when the Assembly is adjourned or prorogued;
3. In accordance with section 21(4) of the Child and Youth Advocate Act the committee shall report back to the Assembly within 90 days of the report being referred to it if the Assembly is then sitting or, if it is not then sitting, within 15 days after the commencement of the next sitting.

This is the first time that a report of this office has been specifically referred to the Assembly, to this committee for consideration.

At this point I'll turn the floor over to Dr. Massolin for further comment. Go ahead, sir.

Dr. Massolin: Yes. Thank you very much, Mr. Chair. My comments will be brief, to the relief of everybody around the table, I'm sure.

Just to underline what you've said, Mr. Chair, this committee is reviewing this annual report, the 2018-19 annual report of the office of the Child and Youth Advocate, for the very first time. What is its mandate? Well, it's basically to review that report from page 1 right to the second appendix. I think on that note, I would add, too, that it's up to the committee to determine a scope for its review because there are a lot of things in this report that it could look at and perhaps would like to scope out. Because the time is limited for this review, as in number 3 of the motion you read out, Mr. Chair, the committee shall report back to the Assembly within 90 days or 15 days.

So what does that mean? That means from 90 days of the referral, which is on November 27. Chances are we won't get there, right? But it will likely be the second part of that, 15 days after the commencement of the next sitting in the winter/spring. It's hard to estimate exactly when that would be and how long before the review, but I think it would be in the order of three or four months, the point being that there's not a ton of time to do this.

I'll leave it there. If there are any questions . . .

6:20

The Chair: Okay. Are there any questions for the doctor at this time? Seeing none, I will move on to invitations for technical briefings. Considering the responsibility that we have been given and based on experience with other reviews from other committees, I think that one of the first steps this committee may wish to consider would be to invite briefings on the report from both the officer and perhaps also the Ministry of Children's Services. Does anybody have any thoughts on that? Comments, concerns?

Okay. Seeing none, we do have a possible motion in regard to this. Is there somebody that would like to – we'll get it up there. Mr. Shepherd. I'll read it. I know that the clerk is going to get it up on the screen there. It would be something along the lines of: Mr.

Shepherd to move that the Standing Committee on Legislative Offices invite officials from the office of the Child and Youth Advocate and the Ministry of Children's Services to provide a briefing on the 2018-19 annual report of the office of the Child and Youth Advocate to the committee at the next committee meeting.

Okay. I'll just read it one more time.

Mr. Shepherd to move that the Standing Committee on Legislative Offices invite the officials from the office of the Child and Youth Advocate and the Ministry of Children's Services to provide a briefing on the 2018-19 annual report of the office of the Child and Youth Advocate to the committee at the next meeting.

All those in favour, say aye. Any opposed? Hearing none, that motion is carried and unanimous.

All right. Organization of the review. As previously noted, this is the first time this committee has conducted a review of this nature, and we only have a few months to complete our work. We need to make some decisions as to how we will organize our review. One option, which worked out well for other committees, would be to strike a subcommittee specifically for the purpose of organizing this review. Under this option the subcommittee would do its work and then report back to the committee on its recommendations. Does anybody have any thoughts on this? Is anybody opposed to a subcommittee? No. Okay. Nobody is opposed to a subcommittee.

Now, my understanding, in talking with both members of the government side as well as members of the opposition, is that they may have a couple of people that might want to be part of that subcommittee. Is that true? Yes? Okay.

So we do have a possible motion here, I guess, before we start to talk about who might be a part of that subcommittee. Would somebody like to move the motion?

Ms Rempel: Yes. However, without some discussion on the membership, like just as far as the numbers, maybe not specific individuals.

The Chair: Sorry. There was a discussion that we'd have two members from each party. Is anybody opposed to that possible option? No.

Go ahead, Mr. Shepherd.

Mr. Shepherd: Pardon me, Mr. Chair. I am certainly agreeable to that; I think that two members from each side is reasonable. I just wanted to clarify before we're putting names forward and making commitments: do we have a sense of how things would work with that committee? Would we be allowing substitutions? Are we allowing teleconferencing? Perhaps the clerk could clarify for us if those are options that the committee needs to clarify now or whether it would simply operate on the same rules as the standard committee.

The Chair: Those are excellent points, sir.

Would you like to clarify?

Ms Rempel: Sure, Mr. Chair. I mean, certainly, you know, a lot of that is at the committee's discretion and then perhaps also at the subcommittee's discretion. It is quite common to have subcommittees use teleconferencing. For a draft motion that I pulled, which is just based on what's been approved recently with Public Accounts and the three LPCs, the committee has included in the motion that substitutions from the membership of the committee are permitted on the subcommittee. If that's kind of in line with what everyone is thinking, I would put up a draft motion in that regard.

The Chair: Sure.

Is anybody opposed to substitutions? Right at this time we don't know, as the doctor indicated. I'm not sure what the volume of the work might entail, so if there's a possibility that you know there's a large volume of work, then certainly being able to share the load with fellow teammates would be probably . . .

Mr. Shepherd: Excellent. No; that all sounds amenable to me, Mr. Chair. Thank you.

The Chair: Okay. Thank you very much, sir. I appreciate it.

Okay. I will read the motion, but was there somebody that would like me to – I know there's a lot to that motion. I'll tell you what. I will read what I have before me right now. It would be that the Standing Committee on Legislative Offices appoint a subcommittee on committee business for the duration of the review of the 2018-19 annual report of the office of the Child and Youth Advocate to meet from time to time at the call of the chair to consider and report to the committee on the business of the committee and that the presence of two-thirds of the subcommittee is necessary to constitute a meeting and that the subcommittee be composed of the following members: two members of the government caucus and two members of the Official Opposition and that the substitutions from the membership of the committee be permitted on the subcommittee.

Is everybody agreeable to the motion that they see before them, before I ask somebody to move it? Okay. Who would like to move it?

Mr. Sigurdson: So moved.

The Chair: Mr. Sigurdson? Okay. I'll read it one more time for the record. Mr. Sigurdson to move that

the Standing Committee on Legislative Offices appoint a subcommittee on committee business for the duration of the review of the 2018-19 annual report of the office of the Child and Youth Advocate to meet from time to time at the call of the chair to consider and report to the committee on the business of the committee and that the presence of two-thirds of the subcommittee is necessary to constitute a meeting and that the subcommittee be composed of the following members: two members of the government caucus and two members of the Official Opposition and that the substitutions from the membership of the committee be permitted on the subcommittee.

All those in favour, say aye. Any opposed? Hearing none, that is unanimous and passed.

Okay. I guess we'll discuss specific membership now. Are there two members for the Official Opposition that would like to? Okay. Thank you very much. I have Mr. Shepherd and Ms Sweet on the Official Opposition side. Do we have two members on the government side? All right. I see Mr. Sigurdson and Mr. Rutherford. The designated chair? How about Mr. Sigurdson. Is that acceptable?

Dr. Massolin: Sure.

The Chair: I just looked to my right.

Okay. Let's go to number 5, other business. Are there any items for discussion under other business? Nope? Okay.

The next meeting will be at the call of the chair. Would somebody like to move to adjourn? All right. We've got Mr. Nixon. All those in favour of adjournment, say aye. Any opposed? Hearing none, this meeting is adjourned.

Thank you very much, folks.

[The committee adjourned at 6:30 p.m.]

