



Legislative Assembly of Alberta

The 30th Legislature
Second Session

Standing Committee
on
Legislative Offices

Friday, October 23, 2020
10 a.m.

Transcript No. 30-2-2

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Second Session**

Standing Committee on Legislative Offices

Schow, Joseph R., Cardston-Siksika (UCP), Chair
Sigurdson, R.J., Highwood (UCP) (UCP), Deputy Chair

Carson, Jonathon, Edmonton-West Henday (NDP)*
Ceci, Joe, Calgary-Buffalo (NDP)
Lovely, Jacqueline, Camrose (UCP)
Loyola, Rod, Edmonton-Ellerslie (NDP)
Nixon, Jeremy P., Calgary-Klein (UCP)
Rutherford, Brad, Leduc-Beaumont (UCP)
Shepherd, David, Edmonton-City Centre (NDP)
Sweet, Heather, Edmonton-Manning (NDP)
Toor, Devinder, Calgary-Falconridge (UCP)**
van Dijken, Glenn, Athabasca-Barrhead-Westlock (UCP)
Walker, Jordan, Sherwood Park (UCP)

* substitution for Joe Ceci

** substitution for Jacqueline Lovely

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, QC	Clerk
Stephanie LeBlanc	Clerk Assistant and Senior Parliamentary Counsel
Teri Cherkewich	Law Clerk
Trafton Koenig	Senior Parliamentary Counsel
Philip Massolin	Clerk of Committees and Research Services
Sarah Amato	Research Officer
Nancy Robert	Research Officer
Jody Rempel	Committee Clerk
Aaron Roth	Committee Clerk
Rhonda Sorensen	Manager of Corporate Communications
Jeanette Dotimas	Communications Consultant
Tracey Sales	Communications Consultant
Lyndsay Tischer	Manager of Human Resource Services
Janet Schwegel	Director of Parliamentary Programs
Amanda LeBlanc	Deputy Editor of <i>Alberta Hansard</i>

10 a.m.**Friday, October 23, 2020**

[Mr. Schow in the chair]

The Chair: Okay. I'd like to call this meeting to order. Good morning, everyone. I'd like to welcome all members and staff and guests to this meeting of the Standing Committee on Legislative Offices.

My name is Joseph Schow. I'm the MLA for Cardston-Siksika and chair of this committee. I'd like to ask all those members that are joining the committee at the table to introduce themselves for the record – and then we'll go to members on the phone – starting to my right.

Mr. Sigurdson: R.J. Sigurdson, MLA, Highwood, and deputy chair.

Mr. Rutherford: Brad Rutherford, MLA, Leduc-Beaumont.

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

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

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

Mr. Carson: Jon Carson, Edmonton-West Henday.

Member Loyola: Rod Loyola, Edmonton-Ellerslie.

Ms Tischer: Lyndsay Tischer, human resource services with the LAO.

Ms Rempel: Jody Rempel, committee clerk.

The Chair: Excellent.

Then on the phone I believe we have Mr. Walker, Ms Sweet. Is Mr. Toor on the phone as well?

Mr. Walker: Yeah. Jordan Walker, Sherwood Park.

Ms Sweet: Good morning. Heather Sweet, MLA, Edmonton-Manning.

The Chair: Excellent. Thank you very much.

Before we turn to the business at hand, a few housekeeping or operational items pursuant to the August 24, 2020, memo from the hon. Speaker Cooper. I would like to remind everyone that outside of those who have an exemption, those observing the proceedings of the Assembly or its committees are required to wear face coverings. Based on the recommendations from the chief medical officer of health regarding physical distancing, attendees at today's meeting are reminded to leave the appropriate distance between themselves and other meeting participants.

Please note that the microphones are operated by *Hansard*, so members do not need to turn them on or off. Committee proceedings are being live streamed on the World Wide Web and broadcast on Alberta Assembly TV. Please set your phones and other devices to silent for the duration of the meeting. Mine is there; I hope yours is as well.

Before proceeding, I would also like to discuss a new practice already incorporated by other committees of using video conference for participation during committee meetings. As you will recall, section 6 of the Legislative Assembly Act permits participants in a committee "by means of telephone or other communication facilities that permit all Members participating in

the meeting to hear each other if all members of the committee consent." Previously this committee had consented unanimously to permit teleconferencing during the committee meetings. Given that we are facing this COVID-19 pandemic, the use of video conferencing could give the committee an additional tool to proceed with its work while respecting social distancing and other health and safety measures. In order to permit video conferencing, the committee will need to adopt a motion unanimously. To that effect, does anyone have any questions in this regard? Hearing none. As I said, we would need unanimous consent.

Would a member like to move – and I'll read out the motion – that

for the duration of the 30th Legislature the Standing Committee on Legislative Offices permit committee members to participate by video conference, subject to the proviso that the committee may require members' attendance at a particular meeting upon passage at a previous meeting of a motion to that effect.

Would anybody like to move that motion? Mr. van Dijken has moved that motion. Again, this requires unanimous consent, so I'll simply ask one question. Does anyone, either present at the table or on the phone, oppose this motion? Hearing none, that motion is carried by unanimous consent.

Moving on to the agenda, we will ask someone – my apologies. That said, I will draw everyone's attention to the draft agenda. I would suggest that we switch the items from 4(a) and 4(b). Would anyone like to propose these amendments? I need someone to move a motion to

switch items 4(a) and 4(b).

Mr. Toor: I will.

The Chair: That was Mr. Walker?

Mr. Walker: No, that wasn't me.

The Chair: Oh.

Ms Rempel: That was Mr. Toor just now.

The Chair: It sounded like Mr. Toor. Mr. Toor, could you just introduce yourself quickly?

Mr. Toor: Can you hear me? Hello?

The Chair: Yes, we can hear you. We did introductions already with everyone on the phone, but I think your phone wasn't quite connected. Just give your name and your constituency, please.

Mr. Toor: Sorry. I had a problem again, but I'll log in again.

The Chair: Okay. All right. Well, Devinder Toor, MLA for Calgary-Falconridge is on the phone, just for the record.

Again, we need a member to move the following motion, that the October 23, 2020, meeting agenda for the Standing Committee on Legislative Offices be approved as revised. Can I get someone to move that?

Mr. Sigurdson: I so move, Mr. Chair.

The Chair: Mr. Sigurdson. All those in favour, please say aye. Any opposed, please say no.

That motion is carried.

Okay. Approval of meeting minutes. Minutes from our last meeting were also distributed for consideration. Are there any errors or omissions of note? If not, would a member move approval of the minutes as distributed?

Mr. Sigurdson: So moved, Chair.

The Chair: Mr. Sigurdson moved that the meeting minutes from the February 26, 2020, Standing Committee on Legislative Offices be approved as distributed. All those in favour, please say aye. Any opposed, please say no. The motion is carried.

Okay. We're now on to item 4 of the agenda, officers of the Legislature. So 4(a) is officers of the Legislature, 4(b) is 2020 compensation review. Now, I would suggest that the committee along with the appropriate Legislative Assembly Office staff consider moving in camera for our upcoming deliberations as we may be discussing details of the contracts of officers of the Legislature. I have a draft motion here that the Standing Committee on Legislative Offices, including Legislative Assembly Office staff, move in camera. Can I get someone to please move that motion?

Mr. Jeremy Nixon: I'll move.

The Chair: Mr. Nixon has moved that motion. All those in favour, please say aye. Any opposed, please say no. That motion is carried.

I would now ask all staff not involved in this portion of the discussion to please leave the room.

[The committee met in camera from 10:07 a.m. to 10:50 a.m.]

The Chair: Okay. Now that we are back on the record, I'd like to open the floor to any proposals or comments by committee members regarding a reclassification request. This would be the time that we'd have a conversation about whether or not we think it's appropriate. Mr. van Dijken.

Mr. van Dijken: Yeah. I would like to proceed with the reclassification of the Ethics Commissioner. I believe there's a motion that's been prepared, and I think we can proceed on that motion.

The Chair: Okay. I have two motions. I will read them both, and you can tell me which one – or actually, rather, I have a motion that I believe that's what you might have in mind. I apologize. Just one. Mr. van Dijken to move that

the Standing Committee on Legislative Offices set the compensation for the position of Ethics Commissioner to reflect the 2014-2015 salary range for a senior official A category of the public service of Alberta.

With that read, I did see that Mr. Loyola had a comment or a question.

Member Loyola: I have a point of clarification. My understanding is that Mr. van Dijken is suggesting that you all move forward with the reclassification of the Ethics Commissioner. Wasn't that the case, not specifically going to remuneration?

The Chair: We're talking about reclassification here, Mr. Loyola.

Member Loyola: Reclassification, right? That's not what I heard in the motion that you were bringing forward. Could you perhaps reread it just for clarity?

The Chair: I'm happy to reread it, but it was very specific about reclassification. I will read it again a little slower for your edification. Moved that

the Standing Committee on Legislative Offices set the compensation for the position of Ethics Commissioner to reflect the 2014-2015 salary range for senior official A category of the public service of Alberta.

Effectively, it is combining motions, but it is specific to reclassification, unless I am mistaken, Ms Rempel.

Ms Rempel: No, I believe you're correct, Mr. Chair. This motion is simply dealing with the classification of the Ethics Commissioner position.

The Chair: Okay. Any interest in having a conversation about this? Anyone like to add to this?

Seeing none, then we'll go ahead and we will vote. I'll call the vote. All those in favour of the motion moved by Mr. van Dijken, please say aye. Any opposed to the motion, please say no.

That motion is carried.

Ms Sweet: Can we get a recorded vote, please, Chair?

The Chair: A recorded vote has been requested by Ms Sweet. All those in favour of the motion, please raise your hand. Mr. Sigurdson, Mr. Rutherford, Mr. Nixon, Mr. van Dijken. We'll get to the phone in just a moment. I guess we'll go there now. Anybody in favour on the phone, please say your name.

Mr. Walker: MLA Jordan Walker, Sherwood Park, in favour.

The Chair: Mr. Toor, are you still on the phone? How do you vote, sir? Okay.

All right. All those opposed, please raise your hand if you're here in person. Mr. Loyola, Mr. Carson, and Mr. Shepherd. On the phone, if you are opposed, please state your name and how you vote.

Ms Sweet: No. MLA Heather Sweet, Edmonton-Manning.

The Chair: Okay. Thank you very much. The vote is 5 to 4 in favour of the motion for reclassification.

That motion is carried.

Now we go on to the next step. I will open the floor for any comments or proposals regarding the 2020 compensation review for officers of the Legislature. Any conversation? I have some proposed motions based on what the committee might go towards. I can read them both.

Actually, Ms Rempel, I believe you have a draft motion.

Ms Rempel: I do, Mr. Chair. I'd just maybe look for the will of the committee. Is this something they might be looking to pursue?

The Chair: Yes. There are two directions we can go. Is there any conversation? Mr. van Dijken.

Mr. van Dijken: Yeah. Under item 4(b) on our agenda, compensation review, I would like to propose that the five offices – and I will leave it to the committee clerk to draft accordingly – be frozen at this time. I believe there's a motion that's been prepared in that regard.

The Chair: Ms Rempel, please.

Ms Rempel: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I believe what Mr. van Dijken is proposing is that

the Standing Committee on Legislative Offices confirm that the compensation for the Auditor General, the Ombudsman and Public Interest Commissioner, the Information and Privacy Commissioner, the Child and Youth Advocate, and the Chief Electoral Officer shall not include any increases or movement within salary ranges for the fiscal year 2020-2021.

The Chair: Okay. We have the draft motion on the floor. Would anybody like to add to the discussion? Mr. van Dijken.

Mr. van Dijken: Yeah. That's accurate to reflect the motion I had.

The Chair: Oh, I apologize. I should've confirmed that with you.

Mr. van Dijken: Thank you.

The Chair: Any discussion?

Hearing none, I'm prepared to call the question on this. On the motion moved by Mr. van Dijken, all those in favour, both on the phone and in person, please say aye. Any opposed, please say no.

That motion is carried.

Okay. We're now on to agenda item 5, other business, report on the audit results for the office of the Auditor General. Before we adjourn, I have one brief information item. I am pleased to report to the committee that on July 10, 2020, the deputy chair and I attended a meeting with the Auditor General and the senior staff from his office as well as the audit team from St. Arnaud Pinsent Steman, which is the firm we have under contract to conduct the annual audit of the office of the Auditor General. I'm pleased to advise that the 2019-2020 audit was completed without any issues identified. As

with the other officers, the Auditor General includes a copy of the audit documents every year in the annual report of the office.

Are there any items for discussion under other business?

If not, the next meeting will be at the call of the chair, in either late November or early December, to review the budget estimates submitted by Legislative Offices.

Would a member like to move to adjourn this meeting?

Mr. Jeremy Nixon: I move.

The Chair: Mr. Nixon has moved that the October 23, 2020, meeting of the Standing Committee on Legislative Offices be adjourned. All those in favour, in person and on the phone, please say aye. Any opposed, please say no. That motion is carried. This meeting is adjourned.

Thank you, everyone. Have a wonderful weekend.

[The committee adjourned at 10:58 a.m.]

