



Legislative Assembly of Alberta

The 30th Legislature
Second Session

Standing Committee
on
Legislative Offices

Thursday, January 27, 2022
1 p.m.

Transcript No. 30-2-10

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The 30th Legislature
Second Session**

Standing Committee on Legislative Offices

Rutherford, Brad, Leduc-Beaumont (UC), Chair
Milliken, Nicholas, Calgary-Currie (UC), Deputy Chair

Allard, Tracy L., Grande Prairie (UC)
Ceci, Joe, Calgary-Buffalo (NDP)
Dach, Lorne, Edmonton-McClung (NDP)*
Long, Martin M., West Yellowhead (UC)
Loyola, Rod, Edmonton-Ellerslie (NDP)
Rosin, Miranda D., Banff-Kananaskis (UC)
Shepherd, David, Edmonton-City Centre (NDP)
Smith, Mark W., Drayton Valley-Devon (UC)
Sweet, Heather, Edmonton-Manning (NDP)
van Dijken, Glenn, Athabasca-Barrhead-Westlock (UC)
Yao, Tany, Fort McMurray-Wood Buffalo (UC)**

* substitution for Rod Loyola

** substitution for Mark Smith

Also in Attendance

Aheer, Leela Sharon, Chestermere-Strathmore (UC)

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
Teri Cherkewich	Law Clerk
Trafton Koenig	Senior Parliamentary Counsel
Philip Massolin	Clerk Assistant and Director of House Services
Nancy Robert	Clerk of <i>Journals</i> and Committees
Sarah Amato	Research Officer
Melanie Niemi-Bohun	Research Officer
Warren Huffman	Committee Clerk
Jody Rempel	Committee Clerk
Aaron Roth	Committee Clerk
Rhonda Sorensen	Manager of Corporate Communications
Janet Laurie	Supervisor of Corporate Communications
Jeanette Dotimas	Communications Consultant
Michael Nguyen	Communications Consultant
Tracey Sales	Communications Consultant
Lyndsay Tischer	Director of Human Resource Services
Janet Schwegel	Director of Parliamentary Programs
Amanda LeBlanc	Deputy Editor of <i>Alberta Hansard</i>

1 p.m. Thursday, January 27, 2022

[Mr. Rutherford in the chair]

The Chair: I'd like to call this meeting of the Standing Committee on Legislative Offices to order and welcome everyone in attendance. My name is Brad Rutherford, MLA for Leduc-Beaumont and chair of the committee.

I'd ask that members and those joining the committee at the table introduce themselves for the record, and then I'll call on those joining us remotely. We'll begin to my right.

Mrs. Allard: MLA Tracy Allard, Grande Prairie.

Mr. Milliken: Nicholas Milliken, MLA, Calgary-Currie.

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

Ms Cherkewich: Teri Cherkewich, Law Clerk.

Ms Tischer: Lyndsay Tischer, human resource services.

Ms Dean: Shannon Dean, Clerk.

Ms Rempel: Jody Rempel, committee clerk.

The Chair: Thank you. And now we will go online. I'll start with MLA Dach.

Mr. Dach: Lorne Dach, MLA, Edmonton-McClung.

The Chair: MLA Sweet.

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

The Chair: MLA Ceci.

Member Ceci: Hi. Good afternoon. Joe Ceci, Calgary-Buffalo.

The Chair: MLA Rosin.

Ms Rosin: Miranda Rosin, MLA for Banff-Kananaskis.

The Chair: MLA van Dijken.

Mr. van Dijken: Good afternoon. Glenn van Dijken, MLA for Athabasca-Barrhead-Westlock.

The Chair: MLA Long.

Mr. Long: MLA Long for West Yellowhead. Thank you.

The Chair: And as a guest that is online as well, MLA Aheer.

Mrs. Aheer: Hello. Leela Aheer, Chestermere-Strathmore.

The Chair: Thank you.

For the record a few substitutions: Mr. Dach for Member Loyola and Mr. Yao for Mr. Smith.

A few housekeeping items to address before we turn to the business at hand. Pursuant to the direction from the hon. Speaker Cooper I would remind everyone of the updated committee room protocols which require that, outside of individuals with an exemption, those attending a committee meeting in person must wear a mask at all times unless they are speaking. In addition, attendees are reminded to leave an 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 and off. Committee proceedings are being live streamed on the Internet and broadcast on Assembly TV. Members participating remotely should ensure that they are prepared to speak or vote when called upon, and videoconference participants are asked, whenever possible, to have their cameras on when speaking. Please set your cellphones and other devices to silent for the duration of the meeting.

Turning to item 2, the agenda. A draft agenda was distributed to all committee members. Does anyone have any changes to propose? If not, could I get a motion to approve today's meeting agenda? MLA Milliken has moved that the January 27, 2022, meeting agenda of the Standing Committee on Legislative Offices be approved as circulated.

Let's go to the question on that. Everybody in the room in favour, please say aye. Anybody opposed in the room, please say no. And moving online, all those in favour, please say aye. Anyone opposed online, please say no. Hearing none, the motion is carried. We've adopted the agenda.

Moving on to item 3, adoption of meeting minutes. Are there any errors or omissions to note? If not, would a member move approval of the minutes as distributed? MLA Allard has moved that the minutes of the January 19, 2022, meeting of the Standing Committee on Legislative Offices be approved as distributed.

We'll go to the question. Everybody in the room in favour, please say aye. Anybody in the room opposed, please say no. And moving online, all those in favour, please say aye. Anyone online opposed, please say no. That motion is carried. Thank you.

Moving on to item 4, the impact of Alberta public service salary adjustments on officers' estimates. At our previous meeting there was an opportunity to ask questions of the Clerk and to inform ourselves of what is being requested or asked for. We have, I think, had that information readily available to us for several days now, from last week.

Is there any discussion to that point around the compensation of officers' salaries that any member would like to start us off with? MLA Allard, go ahead.

Mrs. Allard: Oh, I don't have to do that. Sorry. I'm used to subcommittee now.

I just wanted to make a comment. Thank you to the officers and their teams for getting the budgets to us so quickly. I appreciated the work that they put in it on the request of the subcommittee.

The Chair: Thank you for that.

Any other comments that anybody would like to add?

Mrs. Allard: I'm prepared to make a motion.

The Chair: MLA Allard, go ahead.

Mrs. Allard: Again, thank you for the information. I think, having had the opportunity to review the information – I'm not exactly sure how to word this motion – I would be prepared to make a motion that we approve the increase to officers' salaries commensurate with the salary increases of the public service. I don't know if I need specific wording or if we had a proposed motion from the sub. Oh, beautiful.

The Chair: Yes. I get, I think, the spirit of what you were trying to attempt here. Up on the screen – I believe it goes by text as well to the committee members online so that they can read it as well. I just want to double-check that. Yeah. I believe that's going to be accurate.

MLA Allard, you can read through that motion for the record, please.

Mrs. Allard: Sure. Thank you Mr. Chair. I move that the Standing Committee on Leg. Offices approve a compensation adjustment for the officers of the Legislature which parallels the current salary ranges, the December 2021 and April 2022 salary modifiers and the January 2023 cost-of-living adjustment available to senior officials in the Alberta public service.

The Chair: Any other comments to that motion? MLA Shepherd, go ahead.

Mr. Shepherd: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I'll be very brief. Just to say that I appreciate this motion from Mrs. Allard and certainly appreciate all of the work of the officers of the Legislature, the value they deliver on behalf of the people of Alberta. I appreciate the opportunity to recognize that service.

The Chair: Any other comments? As normal, I'll sort of just give the warning that I give a slight awkward pause for all our folks online to make sure that if there are any hands going up for a comment or if you want to get on a speakers list, please just send a message to Ms Rempel as well. Does anybody else want to add a comment or ask a question regarding the motion?

Hearing none, we will move to the question. Starting in the room, all those in favour of the motion moved by MLA Allard, please say aye. All those opposed in the room, please say no. And moving online, all those in favour of the motion, please say aye. Anyone online opposed to the motion, please say no. Hearing none. Thank you.

That motion is carried.

I appreciate that.

That completes the first of several decisions that we're going to have today. There is another series of motions that we are going to have to get through. Each of the officers has provided this committee with two potential updates to their '22-23 budget estimates, and based on the previous motion, we will now have the estimate needed for the following motions to update budget estimates for the following year.

For each office we will need to address three issues. Has the officer made a request for supplementary funding for the '21-22 year? If so, the committee will need to make a decision regarding the request and, if appropriate, approve the request through a motion. Number two, if the total budget request is different from what was approved in December, then we will need to rescind our previous motion in order to revisit the issue. And, finally, we will need to consider the option presented in the budget, based on the motion that was just passed, for the updated budget estimate for the '22-23 year and make a decision on the request through a motion.

Does anyone have any questions about this process before we move on to the first office? MLA Milliken, go ahead.

Mr. Milliken: I have a quick question. Essentially, what I think I'm hearing from you is that we have to go through each individual officer. Is that the case?

The Chair: That is correct. There are the three things. If they have asked for supplementary funding, we will deal with that. There is one officer who has requested that. Number two, when we look at future estimates, if there is a change in their future estimates, we will need to look at rescinding the motion from the previous meeting in December, it was, or late November and then move on to reviewing their new budget estimates for '22-23.

Any other questions?

Hearing none, we will start off with the Auditor General. The office has requested a change to their budget estimate for the '22-23 year, so we will need to rescind our motion from December 3. Does anybody have any questions to that or would like to possibly

move a motion? A draft motion has been presented here for the committee. MLA Milliken.

Mr. Milliken: Yeah. I think that the draft motion as proposed up on the screen represents what is probably appropriate at this time in order to rescind it, given the previous motion that we just agreed to. I would move – do you want me to read it in for the record?

1:10

The Chair: Yeah. We will need these motions read basically verbatim for our record.

I just want to make sure that we're just looking at the first . . .

Mr. Milliken: With regard to the AG, is what we're dealing with right now, right?

The Chair: Yeah.

Mr. Milliken: Okay. Happy to. I move that the Standing Committee on Legislative Offices rescind its motion of December 3, 2021, approving the 2022-2023 budget estimates for the office of the Auditor General in the amount of \$26,680,000 as submitted.

The Chair: Thank you.

Any other questions or comments to that motion?

Hearing none, I will just move to the question, then. All those in the room in favour of the motion moved by MLA Milliken, please say aye. All those opposed in the room, please say no. And moving online, all those in favour of the motion, please say aye. All those online opposed to the motion, please say no. Hearing none, that motion is carried.

Now we can review the updated budget estimates as provided by the Auditor General. Are there any questions or comments to a potential motion? MLA Milliken.

Mr. Milliken: I'm happy to move forward with a motion, given that we know that the office of the AG has submitted budget estimates that would be, given what we've talked about earlier in this committee, slightly different, slightly higher. So I would propose a motion that the Standing Committee on Legislative Offices approve the 2022-2023 budget estimates for the office of the Auditor General in the amount of \$27,455,000 as submitted.

The Chair: Thank you.

Any questions or comments to that motion?

Hearing none, we will go to the question on it. All those in the room in favour of the motion as moved by MLA Milliken, please say aye. All those opposed in the room, please say no. And moving online, all those in favour of the motion, please say aye. All those opposed to the motion, please say no.

That motion has carried.

Thank you.

Next step. This is from the Chief Electoral Officer. This is essentially an information item for the committee as the office of the Chief Electoral Officer does not require supplementary funding for the current fiscal year or any change to their total budget number that was approved in December. That was just for information on that particular officer.

Ms Rempel, is there anything I needed to add to that? We can move on? Perfect.

On to the Child and Youth Advocate. The estimates for the Child and Youth Advocate are up next. The office has also requested changes to its 2022-23 budget estimates. So we need to begin by rescinding the motion passed on December 3.

Would anybody like to move a motion? MLA Allard, you're up first.

Mrs. Allard: Thank you, Chair. I would like to move that the Standing Committee on Legislative Offices rescind its motion of December 3, 2021, approving the 2022-23 budget estimates for the office of the Child and Youth Advocate in the amount of \$14,922,000 as submitted.

The Chair: Thank you for that.

Any other questions or comments to the motion?

Hearing none, we will move to the question. In the room, all those in favour of the motion, please say aye. In the room, all those opposed to the motion, please say no. And moving online, all those in favour of the motion, please say aye. Anyone opposed to the motion, please say no. Okay. Thank you for that.

That motion is carried.

We are moving on to the updated budget estimates for the Child and Youth Advocate. There is a second draft motion up on the screen.

MLA Allard, if you'd like to round it out for us.

Mrs. Allard: Sure. Just before I move the motion – I probably should have said this earlier for the benefit of those watching, because there are probably so many watching. Since 2008 it's been the direction of the committee – and I think we talked about this as a committee already – to mirror the compensation strategy of the public service. That's what we're doing here.

With that said, I'm prepared to move the motion that the Standing Committee on Legislative Offices approve the 2022-23 budget estimates for the office of the Child and Youth Advocate in the amount of \$15,059,000 as submitted.

The Chair: Thank you for that.

Any other questions or comments to the motion as moved by MLA Allard?

Hearing none, I will go to the question. In the room, all those in favour of the motion, please say aye. Anyone in the room opposed to the motion, please say no. Moving online, all those in favour of the motion, please say aye. Anyone online opposed to the motion, please say no. Hearing none, that motion is carried.

Up next is the Ethics Commissioner. The budget estimates for the office of the Ethics Commissioner are up now, and there is no request for supplementary funding for the current year. So if we rescind our December motion, we can move to considering an updated budget estimate.

Would anybody like to move a motion regarding rescinding the December 3 motion regarding the Ethics Commissioner? MLA Milliken, you're up.

Mr. Milliken: Yeah. I would move that the Standing Committee on Legislative Offices rescind its motion of December 3, 2021, approving the 2022-23 budget estimates for the office of the Ethics Commissioner in the amount of \$932,000 as submitted.

I think that I just want to reiterate what MLA Allard mentioned with regard to the fact that since 2008 it has been the strategic direction of the committee to mirror the compensation strategy of the public service. And on that note, therefore, we recognize that the past practice of aligning officer compensation with that of senior officials of the public service is something that, I think, is important given current circumstances.

The Chair: Okay. Just as we're moving forward, I think we can avoid sort of debating previous motions or adding context to them at this point.

The motion that MLA Milliken has raised here – because you spoke about sort of two different motions. We have one up on the screen. Hopefully, everybody can read it. It is for the rescinding of the Ethics Commissioner's budget that the committee approved December 3.

Are there any questions or comments to that? MLA Milliken, go ahead if you want to add to that.

Mr. Milliken: I think the point that I was making was that I think that the path that we're going down aligns with the comments that I made.

The Chair: Okay. Thank you.

Any other questions or comments?

Hearing none, we'll ask the question. All those in the room in favour of the motion as moved by MLA Milliken, please say aye. Anyone in the room opposed, please say no. And moving online, all those in favour, please say aye. Anyone online opposed, please say no. Hearing none, that motion is carried.

With that motion rescinded, we can now move potentially a new motion for updated estimates for the '22-23 year. MLA Milliken.

Mr. Milliken: You know, I'm just going to do it on the fly, then. I will move that

the Standing Committee on Legislative Offices approve the 2022-23 budget estimates for the office of the Ethics Commissioner in the amount of \$975,500 as submitted.

I would look to the table to ensure that what I have just done verbally represents, probably, the goal of what we're trying to do here today.

The Chair: I think that's been tidied up. Okay. I think that you read it into the record correctly, MLA Milliken.

Any questions or comments to that?

Mr. Milliken: I would just comment that I created it for the record.

The Chair: That's true.

Mr. Milliken: I didn't just read it into the record; I created it for the record.

The Chair: That's true. You did create it. That was not a Ron Burgundy moment. That was a creation.

Any questions or comments to the motion?

Hearing none, we'll ask the question. All those in favour in the room, please say aye. Anyone in the room opposed, please say no. Moving online, all those in favour, please say aye. Anyone online opposed, please say no.

That motion is carried.

The Information and Privacy Commissioner is up next. The updated budget estimates for the Information and Privacy Commissioner include a request for supplementary supply for the '21-22 year. We can address this request, and then we'll move on to maybe updated budget estimates for the '22-23 year. You will have this information provided ahead of time.

Does anybody want to discuss or move a motion around supplementary funding? Mrs. Allard.

1:20

Mrs. Allard: Yeah. I'm happy to move that

the Standing Committee on Legislative Offices approve the request from the office of the Information and Privacy Commissioner for supplemental funding in the amount of \$54,148 for the 2021-22 fiscal year.

The Chair: Thank you.

Any questions or comments around that motion?

Hearing none, we'll ask the question. All those in the room in favour of the motion as moved by MLA Allard, please say aye. Anyone in the room opposed, please say no. And moving online, all those in favour, please say aye. Anyone online opposed, please say no. Hearing none,

that motion is carried.

We'll be moving on, still with the Information and Privacy Commissioner, to the budget for the '22-23 estimates. We will require a motion to rescind if we are going to look at updating. Mrs. Allard, go ahead.

Mrs. Allard: Thank you. Again, happy to move that the Standing Committee on Legislative Offices rescind its motion of December 3, 2021, approving the 2022-23 budget estimates for the office of the Information and Privacy Commissioner in the amount of \$7,159,415 as submitted.

The Chair: Thank you.

Any questions or comments to that motion?

Hearing none, I'll ask the question. All those in the room in favour of the motion, please say aye. Anyone in the room opposed, please say no. And moving online, all those in favour of the motion, please say aye. Anyone online opposed, please say no.

That motion is carried.

The original motion has been rescinded.

Moving on, maybe MLA Allard would like to finish this off. Go ahead, please.

Mrs. Allard: Sure. I'd like to move then that the Standing Committee on Legislative Offices approve the 2022-23 budget estimates for the office of the Information and Privacy Commissioner in the amount of \$7,440,565 as submitted.

The Chair: Thank you.

Any questions or comments to that motion?

Hearing none, I will ask the question. All those in favour in the room, please say aye. Anyone in the room opposed, please say no. And online, all those in favour, please say aye. All those opposed, please say no.

That motion is carried.

I'd just remind all those online to review their mute button status as we go through this meeting, just in case, so we don't have any slip-ups.

Moving on to the Ombudsman and Public Interest Commissioner, which is still four motions to go. Finally, we have the office of the Ombudsman and the office of the Public Interest Commissioner. There is one letter for this item, but the budgets of each office are treated separately. Neither office has requested supplementary funds for the current year; however, they are both requesting changes to their '22-23 budget estimates.

To begin with, could I please get a motion to rescind our December motion regarding the office of the Ombudsman? MLA Milliken.

Mr. Milliken: Yeah. I would happily move a motion that the Standing Committee on Legislative Offices rescind its motion of December 3, 2021, approving the 2022-23 budget estimates for the office of the Ombudsman in the amount of \$3,897,000 as submitted.

The Chair: Thank you.

Any questions or comments to that motion?

Hearing none, I'll ask the question. All those in the room in favour of the motion as moved by MLA Milliken, please say aye. Anyone opposed in the room, please say no. And moving online, all those in favour, please say aye. Anyone online opposed, please say no. Hearing none,

that motion is carried.

Moving on to the updated budget estimates. MLA Milliken.

Mr. Milliken: Yeah. I'm excited to move a motion that the Standing Committee on Legislative Offices approve the 2022-23 budget estimates for the office of the Ombudsman in the amount now of \$4,019,000 as submitted.

The Chair: Thank you for that.

Any questions or comments to this motion?

Hearing none, I will then ask the question. All those in favour in the room, please say aye. Anyone opposed in the room, please say no. And online, all those in favour, please say aye. Anyone online opposed, please say no. Thank you.

That motion is carried.

Okay. One more set to go through. Moving on to the office of the Public Interest Commissioner. Prior to our request for updated budget estimates, the commissioner did send a letter to the committee on January 11 which clarified some details of their December presentation but did not require any action by this committee. However, as we are now revisiting the budget estimates for the office, we will need to rescind our previous motion in order to open up the floor for further discussion of the issue.

For the office of the Public Interest Commissioner, MLA Allard, do you have a motion that you'd like to read in?

Mrs. Allard: Sure. Mr. Chair, I would like to move that the Standing Committee on Legislative Offices rescind its motion of December 3, 2021, approving the 2022-23 budget estimates for the office of the Public Interest Commissioner in the amount of \$1,192,000 as submitted.

The Chair: Thank you.

Any questions or comments to that motion?

Hearing none, we will move to the question for the motion moved by MLA Allard. All those in favour in the room, please say aye. Anyone in the room opposed, please say no. And moving online, all those in favour, please say aye. Anyone opposed, please say no. Hearing none,

that motion is carried.

Potentially one more motion left for this agenda item. MLA Allard, please go ahead.

Mrs. Allard: Sure. I'm happy to move then that the Standing Committee on Legislative Offices approve the 2022-23 budget estimates for the office of the Public Interest Commissioner in the new amount of \$1,223,000 as submitted.

The Chair: Thank you for that.

Any questions or comments to that motion?

All those in the room in favour of the motion, please say aye. Anyone opposed in the room, please say no. And moving online, all those in favour, please say aye. Anyone online opposed, please say no.

That motion is carried.

That concludes the business in agenda item 4.

Moving on to other business, does anyone have any other business to raise?

Hearing none, we'll move on to agenda item 6. The date of the next meeting will be at the call of the chair.

And moving on to agenda item 7, would anybody like to move a motion to adjourn? MLA Allard.

An Hon. Member: I second.

The Chair: It's been seconded needlessly.

All those in favour in the room, please say aye. Anybody in the room opposed, please say no. And online, all those in favour, please say aye. Anyone online opposed, please say no. That motion is carried.

We are adjourned. Thank you.

[The committee adjourned at 1:28 p.m.]

