



Legislative Assembly of Alberta

The 29th Legislature
First Session

Standing Committee
on
Resource Stewardship

Thursday, October 15, 2015
10 a.m.

Transcript No. 29-1-1

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Standing Committee on Resource Stewardship

Kazim, Anam, Calgary-Glenmore (ND), Chair
Loewen, Todd, Grande Prairie-Smoky (W), Deputy Chair

Aheer, Leela Sharon, Chestermere-Rocky View (W)
Anderson, Shaye, Leduc-Beaumont (ND)
Babcock, Erin D., Stony Plain (ND)
Clark, Greg, Calgary-Elbow (AP)
Drysdale, Wayne, Grande Prairie-Wapiti (PC)
Horne, Trevor A.R., Spruce Grove-St. Albert (ND)
Kleinstauber, Jamie, Calgary-Northern Hills (ND)
MacIntyre, Donald, Innisfail-Sylvan Lake (W)
Rosendahl, Eric, West Yellowhead (ND)
Schneider, David A., Little Bow (W)*
Schreiner, Kim, Red Deer-North (ND)
Stier, Pat, Livingstone-Macleod (W)
Sucha, Graham, Calgary-Shaw (ND)
Woollard, Denise, Edmonton-Mill Creek (ND)

* substitution for Pat Stier

Also in Attendance

McLean, Stephanie V., Calgary-Varsity (ND)

Support Staff

W.J. David McNeil	Clerk
Robert H. Reynolds, QC	Law Clerk/Director of Interparliamentary Relations
Shannon Dean	Senior Parliamentary Counsel/ Director of House Services
Philip Massolin	Manager of Research Services
Stephanie LeBlanc	Legal Research Officer
Sarah Amato	Research Officer
Nancy Robert	Research Officer
Giovana Bianchi	Committee Clerk
Corinne Dacyshyn	Committee Clerk
Jody Rempel	Committee Clerk
Karen Sawchuk	Committee Clerk
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>

10 a.m.

Thursday, October 15, 2015

[Ms Kazim in the chair]

The Chair: I would like to call the meeting to order. Welcome to members and staff in attendance for the orientation meeting of the Standing Committee on Resource Stewardship. My name is Anam Kazim, and I'm the MLA for Calgary-Glenmore and chair of this committee. I'll ask that members and those joining the committee at the table introduce themselves for the record, and I will then call on the members joining the meeting via teleconference to introduce themselves.

I would like to note for the record that Mr. David Schneider is attending as a substitute for Mr. Pat Stier, but Mr. Stier may also call in if he has an opportunity.

Starting to my right, I now ask the deputy chair to please introduce himself.

Mr. Loewen: Todd Loewen, MLA, Grande Prairie-Smoky.

Dr. Massolin: Good morning. Philip Massolin, manager, research services.

Mr. Reynolds: Good morning. Rob Reynolds, Law Clerk, director of interparliamentary relations.

Mr. Drysdale: Good morning. Wayne Drysdale, MLA, Grande Prairie-Wapiti.

Mr. MacIntyre: Good morning. Don MacIntyre, MLA for Innisfail-Sylvan Lake.

Mr. Schneider: Good morning. Dave Schneider, Little Bow.

Ms McLean: Good morning. Stephanie McLean, Member for Calgary-Varsity. I'm sitting in. Thank you.

Mr. Kleinsteuber: Good morning. Jamie Kleinsteuber, MLA, Calgary-Northern Hills.

Mr. Sucha: Graham Sucha, MLA, Calgary-Shaw.

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

Mrs. Schreiner: Good morning. Kim Schreiner, MLA, Red Deer-North.

Ms Babcock: Erin Babcock, MLA for Stony Plain.

Mr. Rosendahl: Good morning. Eric Rosendahl, West Yellowhead.

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

Mr. S. Anderson: Morning, everyone. Shaye Anderson, MLA for Leduc-Beaumont.

Ms Rempel: Jody Rempel, committee clerk.

Ms Bianchi: Hi. I'm Giovana Bianchi, committee clerk.

The Chair: Now I'd request the members via teleconference to introduce themselves, please.

Mr. Clark: Greg Clark, MLA, Calgary-Elbow, holding down the fort today in Grande Prairie while Todd and Wayne are in Edmonton.

Mrs. Aheer: Good morning. Leela Aheer, Chestermere-Rocky View.

The Chair: Thank you very much.

A few housekeeping items to address before we turn to the business at hand. The microphone consoles are operated by the *Hansard* staff, so there is no need for members to touch them. Please keep cellphones, iPhones, and BlackBerrys off the table as these may interfere with the audiofeed. Audio of committee proceedings is streamed online on the Internet and recorded by *Hansard*. Audio access and meeting transcripts are obtained through the Legislative Assembly website.

Per the agenda the first item is participation in committee meetings by teleconference. Section 6 of the Legislative Assembly Act permits participation 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 the members of the committee consent." For members' information, the committee rooms are equipped to facilitate meeting participation via teleconference. The member or members participating today via teleconference may not move a motion or vote on any motion put forward in this respect until a motion is passed to agree to participate via teleconference. For the members to participate at this meeting, the committee must pass a motion unanimously to allow for teleconferencing today, or members may instead pass a motion to approve meeting attendance by telephone for the duration of the Legislature. This would not preclude the committee from determining that members' attendance in person at specific meetings is required. In those cases a motion would be moved at the end of a particular meeting requesting the personal attendance of all members at a subsequent meeting.

Any questions or discussion at this point? So far so good? Okay.

Would a member like to move that

for the duration of the 29th Legislature the Resource Stewardship Committee members participate in meetings via teleconference.

Mr. Drysdale: I would make that motion, Madam Chair.

The Chair: Okay. All in favour? Opposed? Motion carried.

Mr. Reynolds: It passed unanimously, Madam Chair?

The Chair: Sorry?

Mr. Reynolds: It passed unanimously? It has to be a unanimous vote.

The Chair: Okay.

Mr. Reynolds: So it did. Yes, I think it did. Yes.

The Chair: Yes, it did. Yes.

Okay. The second item on the agenda is temporary substitutions, Standing Order 56(2.1). Standing Order 56(2.1) outlines the process for the substitution of committee members, and it states:

A temporary substitution in the membership of a standing or special committee may be made upon written notification signed by the original Member and filed with the Clerk and Committee Chair, provided such notice is given not less than 24 hours prior to the meeting.

Our committee clerk has a template for you and your legislative assistants upon request. The template is also available online by going to the OurHouse website, clicking on My Committees on the right side of the main page and then on the Template for Temporary Substitution Letter link.

When substitutions occur, it is the responsibility of the original committee member to ensure that the substitute has been provided with all of the necessary meeting materials. Members of the Legislative Assembly who are not committee members or official substitutions may attend and participate in the meetings, but they may not vote or move motions.

Up next is the approval of the agenda. If you don't have items to add, would a member please move a motion to approve our agenda?

Mr. Sucha: I'll move to approve the agenda.

The Chair: Okay. Mr. Graham Sucha moved that the agenda for the October 15, 2015, meeting of the Resource Stewardship Committee be adopted as distributed. All in favour? Opposed? Motion carried. Okay. Thank you.

The third item on the agenda we have is committee orientation. Since this is our first meeting, I would like to provide you with an overview of the committee's mandate and processes. For specific details I will rely on Mr. Robert Reynolds, who is assigned to provide legal counsel to our committee. The mandate of the Standing Committee on Resource Stewardship relates to the areas of environment and sustainable resource development, transportation, municipal affairs, Treasury Board and finance, energy, and aboriginal relations. The committee may meet to review a bill or to consider an issue referred to it by the Assembly and can also meet on its own initiative to consider issues within its mandate.

Mr. Reynolds, I now turn to you for items 3(b) and 3(c) on our agenda.

10:10

Mr. Reynolds: Well, thank you very much, Madam Chair. I think that most people have probably heard a rendition of the powers and privileges of a committee. I'd certainly be prepared to give you an abbreviated version, which I'm sure you'd all appreciate, brevity being a much-cherished commodity.

As a committee of the Assembly you have all the rights, powers, immunities that go along with any other committee of the Assembly, most important of which, I would think, would be freedom of speech, in the sense that the protections you enjoy in the Assembly relating to what you say also exist in committee, which means that, of course, you can't be sued or pursued anywhere for what you say. You enjoy immunity, as do witnesses who appear before the committee, so they cannot be brought up in court for what they say. This hasn't really been an issue before, but it's always good to know that those powers, the rights and immunities, that exist, parliamentary privilege, if you will, extend to committees and, certainly, serve to protect you and witnesses. You can also ask witnesses to attend. Most over the years have willingly. Certainly, departments have had representatives come, if you want to look at that.

Just to follow up on the chair's point about the mandate of the committee, if you were to in your spare time take a quick perusal through the Standing Orders, you would find the committees' powers generally. I'm thinking 52.01 and in that neighbourhood or with respect to Standing Order 78 and around there, the powers of a committee or the authority that you have with respect to issues at large and your responsibilities with respect to bills that are referred to you by the Assembly.

Just to follow up on what the chair said, you're free to, as a committee, have an inquiry into matters within your, as it were, jurisdiction, which are subject matters that the chair indicated, which are also the names of departments, so you can inquire into any matter within that jurisdiction. Now, of course, if you're sent

something by the Assembly, that has to take priority. If the Assembly directs some matter for you to consider, that would be what you'd have to consider first, notably a bill if the Assembly sent you, you know, a bill to consider. I mean, there are differences whether it's sent before it receives second reading and after it receives second reading, which I can go into now, or it may be more meaningful after a bill has been referred to you that we could discuss the scope of your review, et cetera.

Just to give you a hint and to foreshadow a little bit, when a bill receives second reading, the Assembly has approved it in principle, so you're limited with respect to the changes you can make. Before the bill receives second reading, the scope for recommending change is larger. But just to be clear on that, the committee, your committee, this committee, does not actually change the bill. What you do is recommend changes to the bill because bills, if they've received second reading, for instance, when they go back to the Assembly, they go back to Committee of the Whole, which is where amendments are made.

I must say that I'm flattered that people are taking notes, but I think that if you want, *Hansard* will of course have a transcript, if that's easier for you to look at.

In any event, the other things that you can look at. When I mentioned inquiries: anything within jurisdiction of the departments or the subject areas. You can hold public hearings, if you want, on these inquiries. The Assembly will support you in those inquiries; I mean, the staff will provide assistance.

With respect to annual reports, et cetera, you can also look at a report of any agency, board, commission, et cetera, within your jurisdiction if you want to. I don't actually think that's been done, but you have that power if you want to.

Of course, I think that what someone is going to talk about later is that the next thing you'll be considering, likely – I'm not trying to prejudge when you'll have your next meeting – may well be estimates. I think that there'll be a discussion later about your role with respect to estimates, which is on those subject matters that are listed with respect to your jurisdiction, those departments, but it really is unlike anything that you do outside of estimates in the sense that you're hearing departments talk about their budgets, you know, their estimates, and you go through them. You really don't do that outside of the estimates process, but it does give you a good knowledge and understanding, I would think, as to what those departments are involved in, so that when you do want to have an inquiry on something you'll have a good background with respect to what the department does.

Madam Chair, I'd certainly be willing to entertain any questions.

The Chair: Okay. If there are any questions, then please feel free to ask Mr. Reynolds.

Mr. Schneider: Maybe Mr. Reynolds isn't the person to ask, but he seems to know a little bit about everything: the budget for this committee.

Mr. Reynolds: I know a little bit about that, too. There is a budget for the committee, but I think Giovana would probably be better to answer that.

Ms Bianchi: Basically, the committee, as the standing orders are right now, would be looking at the main estimates for the departments that this committee is responsible for.

Mr. Reynolds: I think he means – sorry – the budget for this committee.

Ms Bianchi: Oh, I'm sorry.

Mr. Reynolds: Like, if they have any money to spend.

Ms Bianchi: Oh, yeah. I'll let Jody respond to that one.

Ms Rempel: I don't have it right in front of me, but this committee has a budget of approximately \$150,000, which is, you know, kind of based on the notion that you may do two inquiries, reviews, whatever, throughout the year. A large, large amount of that is anticipated for any advertising that you might do, because as you know, I'm sure, that is a very costly endeavour should the committee choose to go that way.

The Chair: Thank you.

Any other questions or comments?

Thank you, Mr. Reynolds.

We will now move to item 3(d) on our agenda, which is committee support and administrative matters. Joining us today are staff from the Legislative Assembly Office who are on hand to support us at all of our committee meetings: Mr. Rob Reynolds, whom we have just heard from; Giovana Bianchi, the committee clerk assigned to this committee. She is here to provide administrative, procedural, and general assistance as required. Dr. Philip Massolin, manager of research services, is the head of the committee research services team responsible for the research and information needs of the committee as well as the drafting of reports as directed.

Dr. Massolin, would you like to briefly talk about the research services provided by you and your team?

Dr. Massolin: Yes. Thank you, Madam Chair. I apologize to those of you who've heard me talk about this in the past, and I'll be brief. Basically, research services provides for the information and research requirements of this committee, as the chair has pointed out, and we prepare briefings, reports, things like stakeholder lists, cross-jurisdictional comparisons, if you're studying a bill for instance, and then ultimately help the committee with its final report that's to be tabled or presented in the Assembly, and whatever else the committee may need in terms of its information or research. That's about it.

Thank you, Madam Chair. If there are any questions, I'd be happy to answer them.

The Chair: Thank you, Dr. Massolin.

Rhonda Sorensen, who is not here today, is the manager of corporate communications and broadcast services and provides communications expertise to the committee. I would have introduced her, but she is not here today, so we will proceed.

Mr. Reynolds: Sorry, Madam Chair. Could I just interrupt for a moment? Rhonda, as some of you may know from other committees, is the person who really co-ordinates, as it were, the advertising and communication strategy should you decide to have an inquiry on things. So it would be Rhonda who would come back to you about strategies to communicate your message via newspapers, social media, and she'd be able to talk to you about the cost. Even though she didn't ask me to say anything in her absence, there you are.

10:20

The Chair: That's good. Thank you for speaking on her behalf.

Before we move to item 4, I just wanted to remind members that as a legislative policy committee this committee will play a role in the budget process, considering main estimates for the departments that are within the committee's mandate. Given that the 2015 budget will be tabled on October 27, as has been publicly announced, the committee will likely be considering main estimates

between November 2 and 20, subject to the schedule that will be tabled in the Assembly, over which committee members do not have control. According to the standing orders, the committee cannot consider other matters or meet for other purposes while it has the main estimates under consideration.

Mr. Reynolds, Dr. Massolin, would you like to add anything?

Mr. Reynolds: No. That's fine, Madam Chair. I mean, if members have questions, we have some time now. I realize that this would be the first go-around for a number of members with respect to the estimates. I don't know if there are any questions about that. As I said, we have some time now if there are. It may be better to ask now or visualize it rather than, I guess, when you have your first department show up before you.

The Chair: I was just going to say: if there are any questions, please ask Mr. Reynolds.

Mr. Sucha: I'm sure that this isn't your first rodeo when it comes to estimates, and you've seen a lot of new members going in looking at estimates. What are the biggest hurdles that newer members generally have when they're approaching estimates for the first time?

Mr. Reynolds: I appreciate the question, but not being a member, I'm not sure what it would be. Certainly, as an observer I could just state what I've observed. Now, Mr. Drysdale, on my right, was a minister, so he was in the estimates process on the other side, defending the estimates. He may have some insights into what he thinks are the questions that are the most probing. I think that part of it is just to be familiar with the actual department that you're looking at and to go through, actually, the notes on the budget, et cetera, to look through the items and see if you have any questions. I realize that this isn't a very scientific or extensive view.

If you go through it, you may not know what some of these programs are that the departments have, and one might say that if you see a large increase or decrease in the money for that, you may wonder why, and it may be the subject of a question. On the other hand, I would say that those are things that ministers are usually quite prepared to deal with. The other thing is that sometimes members have things in their constituencies which are of interest to the department or that the department deals with, so members reasonably frequently, I would say, like to ask about things in their constituencies. I'm looking at Mr. Drysdale here because he was a minister. That would be especially true in ministries such as transportation, et cetera.

I don't know if that's of any assistance.

Mr. Sucha: That works. Thanks.

The Chair: Thank you.

Mr. Drysdale: I guess I'd just add, because there are a lot of new people here, you know, that being on that side of the table before, a lot of my colleagues expressed frustration because there are quite a number of you and the opposition gets the first hour and it rotates through. So you will get frustrated because lots of you over there won't get a chance to ask a question at all in estimates because it rotates back. You know, I'm just warning you of that because I heard that frustration from my colleagues before. You know, we'll all get lots of chances, but you won't, that kind of thing. Just so you're prepared for that. I'm sure you'll have a couple of key members that will ask the questions, but lots of you won't get a chance. I'm just warning you about that. Be prepared to be frustrated.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Drysdale.

To members on the teleconference, if you have any questions, then please feel free to ask. Otherwise, it would be assumed it's all good.

Mr. Clark: No questions here.

The Chair: Okay. Thank you.

Now we will move to item 4, which is other business. Is there any other business that committee members wish to raise?

Okay. We will proceed to item 5, then, the date of the next meeting. It is expected that the committee's next meeting will be to

consider main estimates, as mentioned before. Once the schedule is tabled in the Assembly, members will be notified.

Okay. If there is nothing else for the committee's consideration, I'll call for a motion to adjourn. Would a member like to move a motion to adjourn the meeting?

Mr. MacIntyre: So moved.

The Chair: All in favour? Opposed? The motion is carried.

Thank you very much.

[The committee adjourned at 10:27 a.m.]

