



Legislative Assembly of Alberta

The 31st Legislature  
Second Session

Select Special Committee  
on Electoral Boundaries

Monday, May 4, 2026  
9:30 a.m.

Transcript No. 31-2-1

**Legislative Assembly of Alberta  
The 31st Legislature  
Second Session**

**Select Special Committee on Electoral Boundaries**

Lunty, Brandon G., Leduc-Beaumont (UC), Chair  
de Jonge, Chantelle, Chestermere-Strathmore (UC)  
Ganley, Kathleen T., Calgary-Mountain View (NDP)  
Gray, Christina, Edmonton-Mill Woods (NDP)  
Sawyer, Tara, Olds-Didsbury-Three Hills (UC)  
Wiebe, Ron, Grande Prairie-Wapiti (UC)

**Support Staff**

Shannon Dean, KC	Clerk
Trafton Koenig	Law Clerk
Vani Govindarajan	Parliamentary Counsel
Philip Massolin	Clerk Assistant and Executive Director of Parliamentary Services
Nancy Robert	Clerk of <i>Journals</i> and Committees
Abdul Bhurgri	Research Officer
Rachel McGraw	Research Officer
Warren Huffman	Committee Clerk
Jody Rempel	Committee Clerk
Aaron Roth	Committee Clerk
Rhonda Sorensen	Manager of Corporate Communications
Christina Steenbergen	Supervisor of Communications Services
Amanda LeBlanc	Managing Editor of <i>Alberta Hansard</i>

9:30 a.m.

Monday, May 4, 2026

[Mr. Lundy in the chair]

**The Chair:** All right. Good morning, everyone. I'd like to call this meeting of the Select Special Committee on Electoral Boundaries to order and welcome everyone in attendance. My name is Brandon Lundy, MLA for Leduc-Beaumont and chair of the committee.

Government Motion 37, which appointed the Select Special Committee on Electoral Boundaries, was passed by the Legislative Assembly on April 21, 2026. We will discuss the motion in detail a little later during this meeting. However, at the onset I wanted to comment on the committee appointment process that was set out in Motion 37. Instead of appointing specific members to the committee, which is the regular process, the motion provided a specific mechanism for the appointment of members to this committee. Clause C(b) provides that the committee shall consist of myself as chair, three members of the government caucus nominated by the Government House Leader, and two members of the opposition nominated by the Official Opposition House Leader. Accordingly, the Government House Leader has nominated Chantelle de Jonge, Tara Sawyer, and Ron Wiebe. The Official Opposition House Leader has nominated the hon. Christina Gray and the hon. Kathleen Ganley.

I will now ask that members and those joining the committee at the table introduce themselves for the record. We'll begin to my right.

**Mr. Wiebe:** MLA Ron Wiebe for the constituency of Grande Prairie-Wapiti.

**Mrs. Sawyer:** Tara Sawyer, MLA for Olds-Didsbury-Three Hills.

**Ms de Jonge:** Chantelle de Jonge, MLA for Chestermere-Strathmore.

**Ms Ganley:** Kathleen Ganley, Calgary-Mountain View. Good morning, everyone.

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

**Ms Govindarajan:** Good morning. Vani Govindarajan, Parliamentary Counsel.

**Ms Robert:** Good morning. Nancy Robert, clerk of *Journals* and committees.

**Mr. Roth:** Good morning. Aaron Roth, committee clerk.

**The Chair:** All right. Thank you, everyone.

Before proceeding further, as this is the first meeting of this committee, I would like to discuss remote participation in committee meetings. As many of you know, section 6 of the Legislative Assembly Act permits participation in a committee meeting 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. Our committee meeting rooms are equipped to facilitate meeting participation by telephone and videoconference.

If this is something we want to permit, then this committee may wish to pass a motion, which needs to be passed unanimously, to approve remote participation by members for the duration of the Legislature. I would note that such a motion would not preclude the committee from determining that in-person attendance at specific meetings is required. In those cases a motion would be considered

at the end of a particular meeting requesting the attendance in person of members at a subsequent meeting.

With that, I would like to ask if anyone would like to entertain a motion. MLA Wiebe, I see your hand up. Please go ahead.

**Mr. Wiebe:** Yeah, Chair. Thank you. I would like to move that the Select Special Committee on Electoral Boundaries consent, for the purpose of section 6 of the Legislative Assembly Act, to remote participation by any member in the committee's meetings held at the designated committee meeting rooms in the QE II Building during the 31st Legislature unless the committee carries a motion in advance of a meeting that remote participation of members is not permitted at that meeting.

**The Chair:** All right. Thank you for reading that motion into the record, MLA Wiebe.

Is there any discussion on this motion?

All right. Seeing none, I am prepared to call this question. All those in favour of the motion, please say aye. Are there any opposed?

That motion is carried unanimously.

We'll move on to a few housekeeping items before we turn to the business at hand. Please note that the microphones are operated by *Hansard*. There's no remote participation today. I just want to let everyone know that committee proceedings are being live streamed on the Internet and broadcast on Alberta Assembly TV. As always, including the chair, please set your cellphones and other devices to silent for the duration of the meeting.

With that, we can move on to approval of the agenda. Are there any changes or additions to the draft agenda? MLA Sawyer, I see your hand. Please go ahead.

**Mrs. Sawyer:** Yeah. I'd like to move to amend the agenda as presented by (a) adding the following after item 5: 6. Budget for independent advisory panel (a) remuneration and expenses, (b) staff support; and (b) renumbering items 6, 7, and 8 as 7 and 9, respectively.

**The Chair:** All right. Thank you, MLA Sawyer, once again for reading that motion into our record.

Is there any discussion on the motion to amend? Seeing none, I would ask: all those in favour of the amendment, please say aye. Any opposed? All right.

That amendment has been carried.

Now I think we will solicit a motion to approve the agenda as amended, if there's anyone who'd like to move that. MLA Sawyer, please go ahead.

**Mrs. Sawyer:** I move to accept the agenda as amended.

**The Chair:** Thank you, MLA Sawyer.

Any discussion? Seeing none, all those in favour, please say aye. Any opposed? Seeing none, that motion is carried and the agenda is approved. Hon. members, the committee clerk will provide each of you with an updated agenda for today's meeting.

Moving forward now, then, with our agenda, the next item for business is committee orientation, and we'll start with 3(a), which is general mandate and committee support. Hon. members, as this is the first meeting of the committee, I would like to provide a general overview of the role of a select special committee of the Legislative Assembly of Alberta. The same rules, procedures, and precedents governing other committees of the Assembly apply to these committees. However, select special committees of the Legislative Assembly are different from standing committees of the Assembly in that they are struck for a particular purpose. Once the committee has completed its work and submitted its final report to

the Assembly, a select special committee is discharged. Select special committees are given very specific mandates and terms of reference by order of the Assembly and any relevant legislation, and these may not be modified by the committee.

The committee is supported in its work by the nonpartisan staff of the Legislative Assembly Office, or LAO. Several staff from the LAO have joined us at the table today, and they will be available to support the work of this committee. Of course, there are staff from other LAO branches who support our meetings, including research and committee services, communication services, security services, venue services, *Alberta Hansard*, and ITS and broadcasting.

I'll now move to section 3(b), temporary substitutions. Standing Order 56(2.1) to (2.4) outlines the process for the substitution of chairs, deputy chairs, and committee members. For convenience substitution notice templates are available on OurHouse for members to use, or you may draft your own notice. Please note that it is the responsibility of the original committee member to ensure that a substituting member is prepared for the meeting and has all the appropriate materials. Should the original committee member participate in the meeting, then the substitution is no longer in effect. Members who are not committee officials or official substitutes may attend and participate in committee meetings; however, they may not vote or move motions. Should the proceedings move in camera, these members would require specific consent of the committee to remain in attendance.

I would now like to address section (c) under agenda item 3, recorded votes. After a vote on a motion has been conducted, a committee member may request a recorded vote. The process for a recorded vote in a committee is similar to the process for a division in the House. I will first ask those in the room who are in favour of the motion to raise their hand, and then the committee clerk will call the names of those who have raised their hands and record the votes. We will then follow the same process for those in the room who are against the motion. If we have remote participants, they will be asked to turn their cameras on to vote if they wish. After this, the committee clerk will tally the votes and advise the chair of the number of votes cast which are in favour and against the motion. I will then indicate whether the motion has been carried or defeated, and details of the vote will be recorded in the minutes.

This may also be a good time to touch quickly on the process for introducing motions that have not been put on notice. Notice requirement is in place for this committee, which requires many proposed motions and amendments to be put on notice. A detailed memo regarding when notice of motions is required was sent out last week. This is a standard practice for most standing and special committees of the Assembly. Please review the memo and follow up with the committee clerk if you have any questions.

MLA Gray, I understand you have a question under this agenda item.

**Ms Gray:** Yes. Thank you so much. You talked about the nonpartisan support by the Legislative Assembly Office, and thank you as always. We appreciate your support for the work of committees.

This may be covered in your comments coming up under agenda item 4, Chair, but I really just wanted to be clear on the record. Government Motion 37, that has created this committee, was not drafted by the Legislative Assembly Office, correct?

9:40

**The Chair:** That is correct.

**Ms Gray:** Thank you so much.

**The Chair:** Thank you, MLA Gray.

MLA Wiebe, I see your hand. Please go ahead.

**Mr. Wiebe:** I'd like to move a motion if possible, Chair.

**The Chair:** Yup.

**Mr. Wiebe:** That the Select Special Committee on Electoral Boundaries authorize each caucus to designate two staff members who will be granted access to protected documents on the committee's . . .

**The Chair:** MLA, may I interrupt you quickly? I think that motion would be more in order on a different part in our agenda, but I do look forward to entertaining that motion at the appropriate time.

**Mr. Wiebe:** Okay. Thank you.

**The Chair:** Are there any other questions or comments on our agenda item 3? Okay. Seeing none.

I'd like to move us on, then, to review of Government Motion 37. We'll start with 4(a), which is a general overview. Hon. members, I understand that there may be a number of motions related to agenda item 4 that committee members may wish to move. I would like to suggest that we provide an overview of the various elements of Government Motion 37 first, then proceed to opening the floor to move any motion.

As mentioned at the beginning of our meeting today, on April 21, 2026, the Assembly approved Government Motion 37, which established this Select Special Committee on Electoral Boundaries. As committee members will know, the mandate and role of this committee is unique. Clause C(a) of Government Motion 37 lays out this committee's main purpose, which is "to oversee an independent review of electoral boundaries of Alberta on an expedited basis, and without a requirement to . . . [hold] . . . public [meetings]."

I will now like to move us on to section (b), which is the mandate of the committee and panel, before I will open the floor to members. At this time I would like to call upon Ms Vani Govindarajan, Parliamentary Counsel, to provide comments related to the mandates of the committee and of the independent advisory panel. Please proceed.

**Ms Govindarajan:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. I will be brief as committee members have seen this motion. We'll focus on part C of the motion, just to provide an overview of the direction given to the committee and then an overview of the role of the panel. Starting with the committee, the mandate of the committee is set out in part C, clause (a). Specifically, the Assembly has established the committee "to oversee an independent review of electoral boundaries." The motion directs the committee "to engage independent advisers to serve on an independent advisory panel to . . . conduct a review of the electoral boundaries of Alberta and make proposals as to the area, boundaries and names of the electoral divisions."

The motion sets out parameters for the committee's appointments of advisers to the panel. As well, at the request of the panel the committee may make certain requests for information, assistance, and advice on its behalf, including from the office of the Chief Electoral Officer, and may direct support from the Legislative Assembly Office. The motion also gives the committee authority to pay the advisers' remuneration, travel, and living expenses and to pay the panel's reasonable disbursements.

After the panel submits its report to the committee, the committee may meet to review the report and make observations, after which

it must submit the report to the Assembly no later than November 2, 2026. After submitting its report to the Assembly, its mandate is concluded.

I'll briefly speak about the mandate of the panel that the committee appoints. As already mentioned, the panel's mandate is "to conduct a review of the electoral boundaries of Alberta and make proposals as to the area, boundaries and names of the electoral divisions." The motion sets out the parameters for the panel's review and proposals. These are set out in part C, clause (e)(ii). As already mentioned, to support its work, the panel may ask the committee to request on its behalf certain information, assistance, advice, and administrative support from the Legislative Assembly Office. The panel must submit its report to this committee by October 22, 2026. When it does so, its mandate is concluded.

**The Chair:** All right. Thank you so much.

Are there any questions related to that information? Yeah. MLA Ganley, I saw your hand. Please go ahead.

**Ms Ganley:** Yes. I just wanted to sort of speak generally to Government Motion 37 and the mandate of this particular committee. My colleague and I are here today to represent the interests of Albertans. I would like to make it clear on the record that this does not constitute an acquiescence to this particular process. I think we continue to object.

I just want to sort of outline generally how we got to this point. On March 26 the Electoral Boundaries Commission report was tabled. In an unprecedented violation of democracy, convention, and rights the Alberta government threw out the electoral maps developed by the legislated independent Electoral Boundaries Commission and overrode the normal process that would have had the majority report voted on within the House. That is how we got here today.

Each MLA in the Legislature represents thousands of constituents, and those constituents deserve to have their views and voices heard on this matter. We didn't get that opportunity. Then, in what I would say is a gross violation of democracy, the UCP rammed through Government Motion 37, which creates this committee, which is, in my view, a naked insertion of partisanship into politics in terms of drawing the electoral maps. I will point out that, obviously, government members have a majority on this committee.

The motion that sets up this committee, where political views will be put forward on a new map – and, Mr. Chair, it is my view that politicians of all stripes, myself included, should not be drawing electoral maps. As former Premier Rachel Notley wrote in her *Globe and Mail* op-ed, "no politician should ever hold that power," which is exactly what we're doing here today. That no politician draws those maps is one of the principles that underpins democracy, I would say. Voters have to believe that casting their ballots matters, and this will impact that. Politicians should not be picking their voters, and we shouldn't be here. We should have had the opportunity to do what countless governments before us have done, which is to vote through the majority report so that it can be implemented in its totality.

I want to take a quick minute to talk about the work of the Electoral Boundaries Commission. Without covering all of its work, a few important details. The commission produced the first unanimous interim report in 30 years. The commission received the second-most written submissions by any public commission in Alberta's history, more than any other Electoral Boundaries Commission in history. This was the first time in modern history that the commission's report was written by the government-appointed chair and the opposition appointees, so cross-partisan support for that. What it tells us is that the commission did its job.

They did their job properly to consult with Albertans and come up with something nonpartisan.

But the UCP didn't get the results that they wanted, and that is what brings us here today. I want to state clearly that this process is, in my view, illegitimate. It allows for politicians to be involved in a process that we just shouldn't be anywhere close to. It's a pretty transparent conflict of interest, and it doesn't allow members of the public to share their input, which is what they did with respect to the original maps. This action by this government is one of many where they have tried to put themselves above law and democracy. We are meant to have three independent branches: the judicial branch, the legislative branch, and the executive branch. This is yet another attempt by the executive branch to override. This one is particularly egregious. As Commissioner Susan Samson put it, it is a stab in the heart of democracy.

To be clear, we're not here because we think that this process is legitimate; quite the opposite. We're here to do our best to keep Albertans informed about this illegitimate and unconstitutional process. The government has forced this process on Albertans, and we're here because we have a duty to protect their rights insofar as we are able and to defend democracy and try to prevent this committee from chipping away at Albertans' most fundamental rights. We're here because Albertans, whether they live in towns and cities, whether they came here five years ago or five generations ago, deserve to have their vote and their voice matter. We're here because Albertans deserve electoral boundaries that are determined by a fair and independent process and not for political advantage. We take that duty very, very seriously.

I guess to sum up, our presence here doesn't mean that we think that this is a legitimate process – quite the opposite – but we do think that it is our function to defend the rights of our constituents and all Albertans.

Thank you.

9:50

**The Chair:** Thank you, MLA Ganley.

MLA Gray, I understand you do have some questions. If you wouldn't mind, I actually will go to Ms Robert first to conclude our information, and then I'd love to come back to you for your questions.

Okay. Please go ahead, Ms Robert.

**Ms Robert:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Yes. Just very quickly, to finish off in terms of information on the mandate of the committee and the independent panel, in accordance with Government Motion 37 the independent advisory panel is required to report to this committee by October 22, 2026, and it's required to submit to the committee a report based on its review. This committee is required to report to the Assembly no later than November 2, 2026. That report would be presented by the chair during the daily Routine under Presenting Reports by Standing and Special Committees. There is no requirement in Government Motion 37 or the standing orders of the Assembly for a request for concurrence in the report. It just simply needs to be presented.

That's all I have to say about that. Thanks.

**The Chair:** Thank you very much for providing that additional information.

MLA Gray, please go ahead with your questions.

**Ms Gray:** Thank you very much, Chair, and thank you to the team for starting us off with a bit of a briefing of what's brought us here. Also, thank you to my colleague for the opening comments about our participation. I do think it is really important that we are here,

we are participating, but it is not because we believe this process is legitimate.

My questions about Government Motion 37 include that the Premier has stated repeatedly that the independent advisory panel will be using the commission's majority report as the starting point for its deliberations, but when I read Government Motion 37, part C(e)(ii)(B) reads that the panel's mandate is to "incorporate the recommendations provided in recommendation 5 in the addendum to the majority report subject to any modifications the independent advisory panel considers necessary."

I just want to make sure that the colloquial explanation that we've heard on radio shows and so on matches that language that we saw here. Would it be correct to state that Government Motion 37 requires the independent advisory panel to use the commission's majority report, the only legal report, I believe, as the starting point for its deliberations, as has been claimed in the Legislature, or does part C(e)(ii)(B) allow the independent advisory panel to start from scratch?

**The Chair:** I think, I guess, my first comment would be, you know, that it's not up to our committee to sort of dissect what the Premier or anyone else might have said in public. Our mandate of this committee is to stick to the government motion as written, and the instructions as provided in the government motion are what will be going to our independent advisory panel.

**Ms Gray:** Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

I suppose, just clearly through the LAO and our legal team: does part C(e)(ii)(B) require that the panel will use the majority report as the starting point for its deliberations? Am I understanding that correctly?

**The Chair:** I might turn it over to . . .

**Ms Robert:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. We can't interpret the motion. It wasn't something that we drafted. That would be something – the Government House Leader proposed this motion. I don't think our team would feel comfortable interpreting what it may or may not mean. We're just going with what the motion says.

**The Chair:** Thank you.

Yeah. Go ahead, MLA Gray. A follow-up?

**Ms Gray:** Thank you. I appreciate that.

Secondly, I had a question specifically about part C(f) when reading this motion. When the committee makes requests on behalf of the advisory panel around accessing information, statistics, LAO records, or specific individuals providing advice to the panel, I'm just wanting to be really clear. Is the independent advisory panel permitted to make these requests on its own, or will their requests always be required to go through our committee? Subsection (f), to me, implies that it may always go through this committee, but it's not fully clear to me. I'm just hoping to understand in practice what this might look like once the panel is – like, does everything come through the committee, all requests for information, or not? Subsection (f) implies that, and I'd love more clarity.

Thank you.

**The Chair:** Okay. I might turn again if you might have similar comments, or do you have anything you'd want to supplement with?

**Ms Govindarajan:** I mean, we can't provide interpretation, but on the face of the motion the motion states that "the committee may, at the request . . . on behalf of the . . . panel, do any of the

following." I think that's all. We can really only speak to what's on the face of the motion.

**Ms Gray:** Okay. So Mr. Chair . . .

**The Chair:** Go ahead.

**Ms Gray:** . . . in a situation where the LAO is not able to interpret because they were not the drafters – this was a government-drafted motion. I note that the language at the beginning was that Government Motion 37 was approved in the Assembly. To be very clear, it was not unanimously approved. It was approved with the government majority only and no other support.

My quick question to you is: would you, then, on the record be the person who will answer some of these questions that might be more interpretive about how the panel and the committee will proceed? As an example, my original question about the majority report being the starting point for deliberations: is that something that you would be able to answer and set that direction on behalf of the panel, or will the panel be interpreting these things on their own?

**The Chair:** Thank you, MLA Gray. Again, I view the role of our committee and my role as chair to execute the government motion as passed. I think that when you raise these questions that may require a decision of the committee, we can go through the regular process that any committee would, including special standing committees, which may require motions to address some of these issues, and we'll look forward to going through that regular committee process. As chair I don't anticipate stepping outside of that process, which is to make the decisions of the committee by the committee as a whole.

Another follow-up, MLA Gray?

**Ms Gray:** If I may. Thank you very much, Mr. Chair. We have a really big issue with trust right now in this process. A lot of public concern has been raised, especially because this is an unprecedented process. When I ask a straightforward question like, "Will the majority report be the starting point for the panel?" I'm not hearing a response. It's reasonable that the Legislative Assembly Office cannot do these interpretations because they are not the drafters. They are here only to support the work. This is a government motion.

For clarity, though, I will say that this is very frustrating and continues to reinforce to me the illegitimacy of this process. For my part continuing to keep Albertans informed and talking about what is happening here will be a priority, but "Will the majority report be the starting point?" I think is a fundamentally important beginning question. Whether information requests will go through the panel or not, directly to sources or through this committee, and what level of insight we might have on that: I think that's really important. I would be curious to hear more.

I'll move away from those questions, Mr. Chair, to ask about more of the supports and resources available to the panel from the Legislative Assembly Office. I don't know if there's going to be more information along those lines coming. The boundary report that has not been accepted by this government had a massive amount of work, public consultation. There are maps. There are all sorts of technical details. I'm curious who the panel will be asking questions of and what resources will be available to them if we could spend more time exploring that.

**The Chair:** Sure. I believe the government motion does use recommendation 5, the addendum by Justice Miller, as the basis for the independent advisory panel to conduct their work. Again, I

would refer back to what the government motion says on that matter, which is to refer to recommendation 5 or the addendum by Justice Miller.

MLA Ganley, do you have questions?

10:00

**Ms Ganley:** Yeah. I just wanted to follow up on my colleague's question because I think that when you're in any meeting, it's important to know what it is you're doing, like, what the work of the meeting is. Mr. Chair, what I understand you to be saying is that this committee will decide whether or not the majority report of the boundaries commission will be used as a starting point or not at some future date.

**The Chair:** Again, I would say that our committee has been tasked with, you know, being faithful to the government motion, which does reference the role of the independent advisory panel and there is a specific reference to addendum 5 by Justice Miller. I wouldn't necessarily think that would be a decision point, other than to faithfully advise the independent advisory panel of what's in the motion.

**Ms Ganley:** Sorry. My apologies. I'm familiar with what's in the motion. I think what I'm trying to clarify is that this is a government motion. It was not drafted by the nonpartisan LAO, which is why they cannot interpret it. The government is headed by the Premier, and the Premier has said repeatedly on the record that the earlier recommendations, so not recommendation 5, the recommended maps which constitute the majority commission will be the starting point. If we are starting with those maps and attempting to sort of fulfill the mandate of the committee from there, that is a very different operation than if, essentially, this advisory panel that's doing no consultation is starting from scratch. There is a record, a significant record, of public consultation with Albertans. What I am wondering is, like: is the panel going to take that into account? I'm happy with either, that they're going to start with that as a starting point and take that into consideration or we're going to decide that later as a committee.

I'm just trying to clarify what it is that's happening right now because there are two interpretations. Going forward, I think it's kind of relevant for Albertans to know whether we're throwing out that year of work and all that public consultation or whether we're using that as a starting point.

**The Chair:** The independent advisory panel will be using the information gathered by the Electoral Boundaries Commission, including the majority report and including all of the information that was gathered from all Albertans during that process. They will be tasked with reviewing all that information that was gathered as part of the electoral boundary process.

**Ms Ganley:** Reviewing it or starting with it, right? There's a big difference between that this is some information amidst a lot of information and this is, like – they're doing one of two things. Either they're starting with those maps and they're trying to find a way to add additional seats, or they're just basically redrawing the maps. Those are wildly different things. I guess I'm just trying to get clarity on whether that is what they're going to do or whether that's something this committee is going to decide.

**The Chair:** Again, I think it's important that we allow our independent advisory panel to retain their independence during this process and that we are able to give them the information that was in the government motion in this regard. I will say that the government motion lays out that they are to look at the addendum

put forward by Justice Miller and all the information that was gathered during the electoral boundary process.

I appreciate that this is, you know, an important consideration that the committee is looking at. Again, we'll make sure that our independent advisory panel is following the government motion.

Is there anyone else who'd like to join in on agenda item 4? MLA Wiebe, go ahead.

**Mr. Wiebe:** Can I make my motion now?

**The Chair:** I think this is the time where you can make your motion. We're all waiting for it.

**Mr. Wiebe:** Okay. Thank you, Chair. I would like to move that the Select Special Committee on Electoral Boundaries authorize each caucus to designate two staff members who will be granted access to protected documents on the committee's internal site and to in camera portions of all committee meetings to support the work of the committee members.

**The Chair:** All right. Thank you, MLA Wiebe, for reading that motion into the record.

I see MLA Gray has a comment.

**Ms Gray:** Thank you very much. This motion speaks to in camera portions of the committee meetings. I will say as we begin the work of this committee, specifically looking at the history of how we've gotten here with the rejection of a majority report recommendation by the independent Alberta Electoral Boundaries Commission, that I am concerned about what in camera discussions may be coming up in the future.

I'll just start with an opening question to the mover of the motion or any other government member. What in camera discussions do government MLAs intend to have? Why would we be moving off the public record? Right now this committee meeting is being broadcast. There will be a *Hansard* record of the deliberations. If we move in camera, both those things cease. So my first question would just be: why would we be moving in camera?

**Mr. Wiebe:** The in camera is just in case we do move in camera. It doesn't say that we will, but it includes the time should we have the opportunity to move in camera for whatever reason.

**The Chair:** Thank you, MLA Wiebe.

Is there any further – oh, MLA Gray, go ahead.

**Ms Gray:** Just to respond to that, I will just say that I believe we should continue and only operate this committee meeting in public, just given that Albertans are already deeply concerned about political interference and influence in this process and that there's been a very, very strong public outcry about this process and the confidence that Albertans are losing in it. That's just a comment in relation to us potentially moving in camera.

**The Chair:** All right. Thank you for those comments.

I just will maybe add quickly that it would of course be up to the will of the committee to move in camera for any portion of deliberations as the committee sees fit. Just wanted to make those comments that it will be at the discretion of the committee for some of that or all of our deliberations.

MLA Sawyer, go ahead.

**Mrs. Sawyer:** I think the only thing I would add is that it's pretty normal in any committee in any organization just to be able to have that ability. Sometimes you do need to go in camera. It's allowing transparency. This motion is to allow both sides to have two staff

to be in there with us should we go into that. To me it's not out of the norm just to have that ability should we require it.

**The Chair:** Thank you, MLA Sawyer.  
MLA Ganley, please go ahead.

**Ms Ganley:** Yes. I just want to comment on that. I do think that committees sometimes go in camera. I think my concern in this particular instance is that this is not the normal course of business. This government motion is not the normal course of business, so deviating from the standard process, which is just the sort of normal operating of the legislative body – I just think, yeah, this is not close to normal, so suggesting that it would be fine to go in camera: I continue to be extremely worried, and I don't think that having caucus staff on either side and MLAs there is in any way transparent. I think transparent is things that happen on the public record. I will just leave it at those comments.

**The Chair:** All right. Thank you.

If there's no further commentary, I'm prepared to call the question on this motion. All right.

Seeing none, would all those in favour of the motion please say aye. Are there any opposed?

That motion is carried.

All right. I have a bit of a list under this item. I have MLA Sawyer, and then I have MLA Gray for motions. MLA Sawyer, do you mind going ahead?

**10:10**

**Mrs. Sawyer:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. I'd like to make a motion to move that the Select Special Committee on Electoral Boundaries approve the proposed letter requesting expressions of interest for the recruitment . . .

**The Chair:** Sorry. Hang on a second, MLA Sawyer. I just want to make sure we're on the right – we're still on item 4. I think your motion might be agenda item 5.

**Mrs. Sawyer:** My bad. I apologize.

**The Chair:** All good. It's very exciting times. Everyone is ready to go.

With that, MLA Gray, please go ahead.

**Ms Gray:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. I'd like to move motion 16, that reads that

the Select Special Committee on Electoral Boundaries (a) hold and publicly broadcast all of its meetings and deliberations, and (b) commit to make public any documents submitted to or produced at the request of the committee at the earliest possible opportunity after it is submitted or produced.

If I may speak to that.

**The Chair:** Please go ahead.

**Ms Gray:** Thank you so much, Mr. Chair. The Legislative Assembly Office, committee websites, following along on YouTube or through the Assembly site watching the recordings: these are the ways that Albertans will be able to keep an eye on these proceedings.

Again, I will repeat some of those opening comments that my colleague and I have made. We are very concerned about the legitimacy of this process. This is not normal. This is a completely out-of-the-norm situation that we are in here, and I think the best way to make sure that Albertans are informed about what is happening is to (a) operate on the record and (b) make sure that the documents and anything else that might be involved are available for public scrutiny at the earliest possible point.

I'm concerned, as I put on the record a little earlier in this meeting, that if the committee is allowed to hold private meetings, Albertans will be worried about MLA interference in this process. I also am concerned about information or secret documents. Everything that was submitted to the Alberta Electoral Boundaries Commission and all of their public hearings were fully recorded on the record. It is now on the Elections Alberta website. You can download the package of submissions that have been made. That was all very transparent.

Because this is an abnormal process, because this has been created by a government motion, this committee and panel process, my motion is intended to ensure that Albertans can see this, that we're not doing things behind closed doors, and that the Alberta public can follow along with what we are doing.

It's for these reasons that I move this motion, which I think is fairly straightforward as well. I look forward to hearing what government members may think.

**The Chair:** Thank you, MLA Gray.

Is there anyone else wishing to join in? MLA de Jonge, please go ahead.

**Ms de Jonge:** Thank you, Chair. Yeah. Just to speak to motion 16, my concern is, you know, first, that it's a bit premature. It was mentioned that all our committee meetings are already public. They're broadcasted on multiple platforms. We have a gallery here in the committee room for members of the public to attend and watch.

That said, committee deliberations, especially when discussing personnel decisions and appointments, you know, are really HR discussions and they're always conducted in camera. That's to ensure that members of this committee can have frank and open discussions about the suitability of those candidates. If we're demanding that those discussions are then to be publicly broadcasted, that's a bit disrespectful to potential applicants, that we're discussing their suitability and that that would be broadcasted. I think that could lead to potential applicants not expressing interest in the position, not just the discussion of their suitability but also requiring that documents such as their letters of interest or their CVs be made public. For those reasons, I will not be voting in support of this motion.

**The Chair:** All right. Thank you, MLA de Jonge.

MLA Ganley, please go ahead.

**Ms Ganley:** Mr. Chair, I think, on balance, we should be far more concerned about being disrespectful to the public than being disrespectful to people who are applying to hold a public position. I think that in this instance it is incredibly important to have a record. This is unprecedented, and I think that the people who are applying for this position ought to be subjected to public scrutiny. We apply to hold public positions. I would say that we are subjected to significant scrutiny. Yeah. I think that in this instance it is really important that those deliberations be on the record because I think to do otherwise is disrespectful to the public, who deserve to know what's going on.

**The Chair:** All right. Is there anyone else wishing to join? MLA Gray, please go ahead.

**Ms Gray:** Thank you. I just really want to repeat that I think when we are talking about deliberations, like who will chair this very unique MLA-led committee reporting to the panel chair position, having that conversation in public in a way that Albertans can trust is going to be incredibly important.

Now, judges – and I realize a judge as chair seems to me like it may be likely. There was a judge as chair in the past. I think there may be some other types of people who potentially could become, but let me just say that judges have their curriculum vitae as public record. They have the rulings they've made in the past as public record. Someone applying to or being asked by us to chair a process like this, I suspect, would be comfortable with and understand that talking about the role of them as that really important chair of this brand new panel would be willing to be part of the conversation. If someone is not willing to have their record discussed on the record, then that is another moment of concern.

I don't think that this is an HR concern per se because we're not talking about a normal employment situation here. We're asking for someone to weigh in on electoral boundaries under the auspices of political interference. There have been allegations that there's impropriety done between the interim report and the main report because there was such strangeness: the interim report being unanimously supported by all five panel members and then all of a sudden that disappearing. With a real perception that, like, things wildly deviated, being able to have the conversations on the record is an important priority for me. I think it should happen.

I will leave it to you, Mr. Chair, and to the committee members to vote on their conscience.

**The Chair:** Well, thank you, members, for the discussion on this motion. Seeing that we don't have any hands, I am prepared to call this vote. All those in favour of the motion please say aye. All right. Are there any opposed?

That motion is defeated.

I think we'll stay on agenda item 4 just to make sure we can conclude those deliberations. Are there any further discussions or motions? MLA Ganley, I see your hand. Please go ahead.

**Ms Ganley:** Yes, Mr. Chair. I would like to move motion 18 just for the record so we can get it up on the screen, which reads as follows, that

the Select Special Committee on Electoral Boundaries require (a) all meetings and deliberations of the independent advisory panel be held and publicly broadcast and (b) any documents submitted or produced by the independent advisory panel be made public at the earliest possible opportunity after the document is submitted or produced.

10:20

The purpose of this motion, which deals, rather than with us, with the advisory panel – this committee has a bit of a weird structure. There's the committee of MLAs who are making the decisions, and then we have an advisory panel, the role of which is not entirely clear, as we litigated earlier. I think this is a significant departure, I would say, from the normal course of business. The government has sort of rejected the work of the commission, and this do-over, if it is that – I think we're unclear on whether it's that or whether they're using it as a starting point – I think has created significant public concerns, and folks are skeptical of the process, rightly so. I just think that sunlight is the best disinfectant, so in order to try to make this process as, you know, amenable to the public as possible – I don't think we can render it legitimate, but there is better and there is worse – I think we should ensure that the independent advisory panel conduct its business openly and on the record in a way that all Albertans are able to observe.

Yeah. That is, essentially, what this motion is about. Like, we don't know. We don't know if the advisory panel is – where or what their starting point is. We don't know what they're going to do in terms of that there's no specific mandate that they must do public

consultations. When we have a boundaries commission with an unprecedented number of submissions that have been disregarded, I think that this advisory panel needs to operate in the public, as the original commission did. I think it is important for their deliberations and for any document that comes before them to be on the record, especially in light of some of the allegations that have come out, you know, around the minority report and how we got here.

Yeah. That is why I move this motion. I am hopeful that government members will be willing to submit it. I don't think that it should be controversial that a panel doing work this important ought to do its work where the public can see it.

**The Chair:** Thank you, MLA Ganley.

Is there anyone else? MLA de Jonge, please go ahead.

**Ms de Jonge:** Thank you, Chair, and thank you to the hon. member for her motion. Just to comment on something the hon. member said on motion 18 part (a), that the independent advisory panel hold all meetings and deliberations publicly, I believe the member said, "as the original commission did," but I do not believe that's the case. The Electoral Boundaries Commission that just completed its work did not deliberate in public, so it's strange that members of the opposition would now want to hold the independent advisory panel to a completely different standard.

I think it's important to the work of the independent panel that they're able, as the original commission, to deliberate and discuss in private where required. You know, what they decide to include or not include in their final report to the committee, I think, is entirely up to members of the independent panel and their best position to decide what documents, if any, to provide or to be made public in their final report to this committee. I'll just leave my comments there.

**The Chair:** Thank you, MLA de Jonge.

Is there anyone else? MLA Gray, I see your hand. Please go ahead.

**Ms Gray:** Yes. Just to be very clear, this motion absolutely does ask this new panel to operate to a higher standard because of how abnormal this process is, because there is such question about the legitimacy of what is happening, because there is concern about political interference, because MLAs are now involved in a way that they have not been before. So, yes, this would require a higher standard, and that is one of the reasons why the Official Opposition has moved this motion.

To be very clear, we know what the previous panel did and how they operated. A great deal of their work was on the public record with *Hansard* transcripts, all the public hearings, and so on. We are asking for the totality of work being produced now to be on the public record so that all Albertans can have confidence in how decisions are being made and what is happening here. I would like to know how decisions are being made. I would like to see this, and I imagine there are many, many other Albertans who would agree. That is why I will be supporting my colleague's motion.

Thank you.

**The Chair:** Thank you, MLA Gray.

Are there any others wishing to discuss this motion?

All right. Seeing none, I am prepared to call the vote. All those in favour of this motion, please say aye. Are there any opposed?

That motion is defeated.

I think we're still on agenda item 4. MLA Gray, I see your hand. Please go ahead.

**Ms Gray:** Thank you. I would like to move motion 20, that the Select Special Committee on Electoral Boundaries (a) prohibit the independent advisory panel from discussing the subject matter of the panel or receiving any documents, maps, or proposals for electoral boundaries outside of its public meetings and (b) require all members of the independent advisory panel to publicly report to our committee any perceived attempt by an individual other than a member of the independent advisory panel to provide them with materials relevant to their mandate or otherwise influence their deliberations.

Mr. Chair, I make this motion specifically because of the concerns that have arisen around the public discourse of how we got here with Government Motion 37. Specifically, after the commission's report was published and tabled in the Legislature, the public has now come to learn about the perception of political interference in the process.

There are three key pieces related to this. (A) there are credible accounts that a member of the Premier's staff was sharing proposed maps from the minority report before it was tabled in the Legislature. Our leader, Naheed Nenshi, spoke in the Legislature on April 20 about this, how maps were being shared with people in the northeast as well as trying to sell memberships for nomination races, and that was prior to the minority report being published. This appears to mean that someone in government was putting inappropriate influence on members of the commission. That's certainly the only interpretation I can think of.

(B) in his response to the minority report in the electoral boundaries report the judge says, "What might be the minority's true motivation for this?" on page 64. The judge is asking us to consider why the minority report writers are doing what they did and what might be the incentive for them to do this.

(C) additionally, there are multiple MLAs and private individuals who submitted proposed electoral maps with a government of Alberta classified protection A notation on the documents. One example can be found in submission 809 during the second round of consultations, submitted by the UCP Member for Bonnyville-Cold Lake-St. Paul. We know that this classification signifies that these maps were produced by some part of the government, not by private citizens and not by MLAs in their personal capacity.

So those three things strongly indicate that someone in the orbit of government was putting pressure or providing materials and maps to the commissioners who wrote the minority report.

I would like this motion to pass to ensure that the independent panel is truly independent. If there's any chance of interference, it would make it so that the panel members are obligated to report that to us. Obviously, I want the independent panel members to be able to talk to each other. That's why we've worded the motion we have. But if there is no intention to interfere with or influence the panel, there should be no challenge with passing this motion.

Albertans don't trust the process to be fair. At the minimum the members of the panel should be required to tell this committee if there have been attempts to influence them or to shape their deliberations, and then at least we will have that on the public record, and we can deal with it appropriately. To my knowledge, no such declarations were made about the work of the previous boundaries commission that went into this report, but going forward, again, we need to operate on a higher standard. I think this makes it clear. If anyone tries to influence or provide you maps, you need to tell the committee. That's why I make this motion.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

10:30

**The Chair:** Thank you, MLA Gray.

Is there anyone else? I see MLA de Jonge. Please go ahead.

**Ms de Jonge:** Thank you, Chair, and thank you to the hon. member for her motion. My points are twofold. First, to point (a) of motion 20, actually, my comments are quite similar to the comments I made to motion 18 that, yeah, the Electoral Boundaries Commission that just completed its work didn't deliberate in public; thus, the independent advisory panel I believe should be held to that same standard. You know, the motion says that it prohibits the panel members from discussing the subject matter of the panel in private deliberations, which is what the previous commission did. I think it's important that this independent panel be held to that same standard, and what they include in their report to this committee is fully up to the members of that panel.

Then to motion 20 point (b) I would say that by not limiting or defining what must be included in their final report, the members of the independent panel are already empowered to report to this committee any attempt to influence their deliberations.

**The Chair:** Thank you, MLA de Jonge.

MLA Ganley, please go ahead.

**Ms Ganley:** Yeah. Two things. Permitted to report attempts to interfere and required to report attempts to interfere are wildly different things, in my view. I would also say that we are in a different situation now. That previous situation was the normal process, the process that has occurred every time that this has undergone. We are now in a completely different, and in my view illegitimate, process that is potentially a violation of Albertans' right to vote. We also have multiple credible allegations of interference, which we did not have prior to the original commission being convened.

I would say, Mr. Chair, that it is fairly clear in the report itself – I'm going to quote directly on page 62. It says:

First, the minority's approach violates the principles of procedural fairness, and, relatedly, the values underlying [section] 3 of the Charter. The interim report was unanimous. The about-face by the minority did not give the public any notice of what the minority proposes. We wish to highlight but a few of the most egregious examples. To begin, [the] changes to Red Deer, Cochrane, and Chestermere are the product of absolutely no public input or engagement.

It goes on from there to sort of list others, but I won't belabour the point because it is on the record.

I think what the majority is saying here is that we had a unanimous report. We had public submissions on that unanimous report. We then had some changes, as again is the normal process, in response to those public submissions, and then we get this minority report that comes out of nowhere, that is nowhere on the public record. No one advocated for this, at least not publicly, and then we get allegations. We get documents that are marked as though they are produced somewhere within government being circulated by MLAs. We get maps being circulated before the report is published by members of the Premier's staff.

I think all of those things combine to say that we need a new standard for this, right? When we went into the normal process, it was (a) the normal process; there were (b) public submissions. Now we're in a very different place, and we therefore need to do things more carefully and with greater transparency.

**The Chair:** All right. Thank you, MLA Ganley.

MLA Gray, please go ahead.

**Ms Gray:** Listening carefully to the points that government members are making, I would be open to amending this to strike the section (a) piece. You voted down my earlier motion; I can

understand that. By “understand that” I mean it has already been decided by government members, not that I agree with the decision.

To require all members of the independent advisory panel to publicly report any attempts or perceived attempts to interfere I think is incredibly important. I want to make sure that there is a responsibility imposed on the panel members that they take the initiative to report these things to solve problems before they occur and to increase the level of transparency. Perhaps would government members be swayed if we tightened this motion up so that it becomes a more clear requirement only to publicly report to the committee any perceived attempts by an individual other than a member of the independent advisory panel to provide them with materials relevant to their mandate or otherwise influence their deliberations? I’m happy to streamline this motion to be able to achieve the outcome of: we need to know if someone tries to interfere.

**The Chair:** Thank you, MLA Gray. Just procedurally here, are you asking for consent of the committee to amend this motion? I just want to check with our clerk.

Okay. It was more in the context of general discussion, then.

**Ms Gray:** Let’s talk general discussion because we won’t start subamending my own motions unless I get a sense that that might take me somewhere. Let’s go there and see if any of those arguments are compelling to the government.

**The Chair:** Thank you for that clarification.

Happy to see if there are any members wishing to respond. MLA de Jonge, I see your hand. Go ahead.

**Ms de Jonge:** Thank you, Chair. Yeah. In my initial comments I spoke to my concerns with both section (a) and section (b) of motion 20. I think this special select committee not defining or limiting at all what is to be included in the independent panel’s report to us empowers them to include what the member opposite is asking for. You know, I raised my concerns with both (a) and (b) so would not be swayed by an amendment.

**The Chair:** Okay. Thank you, MLA de Jonge.

MLA Gray, go ahead.

**Ms Gray:** I am hearing that the government does not support putting an onus on the panel members to disclose to us any attempts to influence. Hearing that, I won’t try to amend my own motion, and I will end my comments there.

**The Chair:** Thank you, MLA Gray.

Thank you, all members, again for your comments and deliberations on this motion. I am prepared to call this vote. All those in favour of the motion, please say aye. Any opposed? All right.

That motion is defeated.

**Ms Gray:** Mr. Chair, may I request a recorded vote?

**The Chair:** Absolutely.

All right. A recorded vote has been requested. The process for a recorded vote in a committee is similar to the process for a division in the House. I will first ask those in the room who are in favour of the motion to raise their hands.

**Mr. Roth:** Hon. Ms Gray, hon. Ms Ganley.

**The Chair:** All right. Now I will ask those who are opposed to the motion to raise their hands.

**Mr. Roth:** Mr. Wiebe, Mrs. Sawyer, Ms de Jonge.

**The Chair:** All right. I think we have everyone who has voted.

**Mr. Roth:** Sorry. Mr. Chair, total for the motion, two; total against, three.

**The Chair:** All right. Thank you.

That motion is defeated.

All right. Unless someone else would like to add to agenda item 4, I am prepared to move us on our agenda to agenda item 5, which is composition of the independent advisory panel and then chair of the independent advisory panel. Hon. members, the committee will now proceed to addressing the process of appointing a chair for the independent advisory panel. Clause C, section (d)(ii)(A) of Government Motion 37 specifies the criteria that must be considered in appointing the chair.

**10:40**

I would now like to open the floor to any comments, questions, or motions. MLA Sawyer, you were so eager earlier in our agenda. I would just feel bad if I didn’t give you the first crack here, so why don’t you go ahead?

**Mrs. Sawyer:** Thank you very much, Mr. Chair. Apologies for jumping the gun earlier. But, yes, I did want to move a motion, that the Select Special Committee on Electoral Boundaries (a) approve the proposed letter requesting expressions of interest for the recruitment of the chair of the independent advisory panel provided by the Member for Olds-Didsbury-Three Hills to the chair of the committee on April 29, 2026, as distributed, and (b) direct that the letter be sent to the Chief Justice of the Court of King’s Bench of Alberta and the Chief Justice of the Court of Appeal of Alberta, requesting it be distributed to all current and retired judges of the Court of King’s Bench of Alberta and the Court of Appeal of Alberta.

**The Chair:** All right. Thank you very much, MLA Sawyer, for reading that into the record.

I will now open the floor for discussion on this motion. MLA Ganley, please go ahead.

Oh, sorry. MLA Sawyer, would you like to kick this off?

**Mrs. Sawyer:** If I could speak to my motion, that would be . . .

**The Chair:** Yeah. Sure.

**Mrs. Sawyer:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Yeah. The point of this is to allow both retired and sitting judges to be able to apply for the position, and by asking the Chief Justices – they’re in the best position to circulate those to all those members. Judges and retired judges are already ethically bound to act impartially, so I don’t think that this would be out of line. It should enhance the public’s confidence in the process. With respect to the other piece of that letter, it speaks to deadlines. I think having that deadline in there is to ensure that 10 days gives them enough time to submit, but it also allows us to move the process. So I submit this under those grounds.

**The Chair:** All right. Thank you, MLA Sawyer.

MLA Ganley, please go ahead.

**Ms Ganley:** Yes. I would like to move an amendment to this motion. Would you like me to read it, Mr. Chair?

**The Chair:** Sure. Please go ahead.

**Ms Ganley:** Okay.

(A) in clause (a) by striking out “as distributed” and substituting the following: “after making the following changes: (i) striking out all reference to the phrase ‘retired or,’ and (ii) striking out paragraph 3 of the proposed letter and substituting the following: ‘The committee requests your recommendation for potential candidates for chair of the independent advisory panel. Please forward any recommendations you have to electoralboundariescommittee@assembly.ab.ca no later than 3 p.m. by Thursday, May 14, 2026,’” and (b) by striking out clause (b) and substituting the following: “(b) direct that the letter be sent to the Chief Justice of the Court of King’s Bench of Alberta and the Chief Justice of the Court of Appeal of Alberta.”

Mr. Chair, just to sort of illuminate on the slightly technical language there. Essentially, what this is doing is that it’s requiring that the applications come from current judges, not retired judges, and that we request a recommendation from the Chief Justice of Alberta on who ought to chair this. I think that this is pretty critical at this point, and there are a couple of reasons for that. First of all, I think, in light of this new process and the impacts that it may have on Albertans’ right to vote, the Chief Justice is in the best position to assess individuals and their familiarity or work with section 3 of the Charter, which protects Albertans’ right to vote. That’s going to be relevant in this debate, so I think having someone with that specific experience is going to be important.

This is unprecedented. Normally when we deal with unprecedented law, it sort of makes its way up, potentially, to the Supreme Court, so I think that having someone with that particular grounding is important. I also think that having the Chief Justice of Alberta propose a chair: it’s just better placed than this committee to make that decision. I mean, things are hot in political circles, hotter than they have been in my 11 years, and I think that this particular committee and – well, there’s an act before the Legislature as well – this particular motion have created some significant level of friction. I think that partisanship is at an all-time high, and I think that Albertans need to know that this is being done as independently as possible. It would help reassure Albertans that this is a process that is above the political fray.

We have a Premier who has publicly commented on her desire to control judges, so I think having that independence is extra important at this particular moment, and I think, yeah, the Chief Justice would be best placed to make those determinations. I think the legal and ethical obligations residing on sitting judges are different, and I think that that is important. I mean, that’s a fairly large pool, and it worries me if government members of the committee are of the view that that fairly large pool of justices who reside in Alberta is insufficient, and they need to broaden it further in this way.

I would suggest that these amendments improve the motion, increase public transparency, and increase, essentially, independence, which I think is at an all-time level of importance right now. Thank you.

**The Chair:** Thank you, MLA Ganley.

I’ll open it up for continued discussion on this amendment. Go ahead, MLA Sawyer.

**Mrs. Sawyer:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. I’ll start my comments on the amendment. By limiting it – I don’t know why we would shrink. Right now the wording that I have allows for both retired and sitting judges. That gives us a nice large pool. I don’t know why we would put an amendment limiting people of qualification, whether they’re retired or active, from being able to apply as chair, and frankly I would suggest there is a potential, with respect to retired judges,

that they might potentially have more time to devote as chair, so another reason not to preclude them.

I find a little bit of the commenting a little bit concerning to almost make it seem as though a retired judge could not still remain independent. I don’t think that’s a good way we want to frame that, so I would not be in support of this amendment. I think that right now the way I have it worded is to allow a very vast pool of qualified candidates.

**The Chair:** Thank you, MLA Sawyer.

Go ahead, MLA Gray.

**Ms Gray:** Thank you, MLA Sawyer, for those questions and comments, because I’m happy to speak to exactly why we don’t believe a retired judge meets the standard that we’re looking for for this committee. It’s incredibly important that there be a neutral chair, someone who understands the Charter issues, section 3 of the Charter, and what is happening, someone who’s up to date with the current state of the law. Specifically, when it comes to whether someone may be neutral or not, retired judges often return to private practices, which is perhaps something that might bring their neutrality into question. As well, the Canadian Judicial Council has said that when judges retire, that same kind of standard that they are held to, the responsibilities, the things they’re responsible for, ends when they retire, so it’s a different level.

**10:50**

This is in no way intended to smear retired judges. But for this, with the transparency and accountability issues that have been raised, with the importance of this being fundamental to democracy, let us approach currently active judges who will be up to date on the current state of legal affairs and who can be counted on to be neutral. We lose that when talking to groups of people who are retired. They may have other influences. I wanted to make that point, specifically to retired or not retired, and I agree strongly with my colleague who moved this amendment.

Then just on the second part of this, which is asking for recommendations, if we want to eliminate some of the political interference accusations, politicians shouldn’t make this choice. Let’s have a neutral, outside party choose the chair and help alleviate some of the concerns.

I strongly support the amendment of my colleague, with the two pieces. Politicians shouldn’t be making the decision of who is chairing, and it should be an active sitting judge, for the reasons that I and my colleague have outlined.

**The Chair:** All right. Thank you.

Unless there are more comments on this amendment, I will call the vote on the amendment as presented to us. All those in favour, please say aye. Any opposed?

That amendment is defeated.

We can continue discussion on the main motion if anyone else has any comments to add on the main motion.

Seeing none, I will now call the vote on the motion. All those in favour, please say aye. Are there any opposed? All right.

That motion is carried.

All right. I think we can continue on under agenda item 5. Are there any other comments or motions? MLA Sawyer, please go ahead.

**Mrs. Sawyer:** Yeah. I had motion 4 that I’d wanted to move if I could. I move that

the Select Special Committee on Electoral Boundaries accept applications for the position of chair of an independent advisory

panel to conduct a review of the electoral boundaries of Alberta until 3 p.m. on May 14, 2026.

**The Chair:** This is very similar to what we just passed. No, no; it's fine. Perhaps we can maybe get through this one pretty briefly. Is there anyone who would like to make a comment on this? It doesn't look like it. We can go through this quickly.

All those in favour of this motion, please say aye. Any opposed? That motion is carried.

All right. Just opening the door again if there are any other motions or discussions? MLA Sawyer, always a pleasure to hear from you.

**Mrs. Sawyer:** Thank you. Always a pleasure to be heard. I have motion 5 I'd like to put out if I may. I'd like to move that the Select Special Committee on Electoral Boundaries request the Ministry of Justice to provide a list of names and contact information of all the retired and current judges of the Court of King's Bench . . .

**The Chair:** Sorry, MLA Sawyer. I'm just getting some thoughts here from LAO. Just bear with me one second here.

Sorry. Thanks for everyone's patience here. In light of the previous motions passed, it doesn't sound like this motion is required. We'll save everyone some time and maybe give them some time back at the end. I certainly appreciate the discussion around this.

All right. Once again – oh, we're still on agenda item 5.

MLA Ganley, I see your hand. Please go ahead.

**Ms Ganley:** Yes, Mr. Chair. I would like to move motion 13. That motion is that the appointment of the chair of the independent advisory panel be determined by a unanimous decision of the Select Special Committee on Electoral Boundaries. That would be us. I can provide reasoning if – oh, we've got it up. Excellent. Essentially, the reason I am moving this motion is because this would require us all to be unanimous; i.e., both sides to agree to the appointment of a chair. I think that that takes some of the appearance of partisanship out of it. I do think that it's incredibly important to have a chair that both sides can agree to. I think that this – well, for the reasons outlined, I would say extensively, prior in my comments and the comments of my colleague, I think that it's pretty important to ensure that the individual is independent and that the public can see very clearly that it is independent. I realize that this is a departure from past practice where the government would simply use its majority to make the decision, but I think unanimity in this case is pretty important.

Thank you.

**The Chair:** Well, thank you, MLA Ganley.

I would like to provide some comments on this. This motion proposes that the decision of this committee to appoint the chair of the independent advisory panel be made by unanimous decision as opposed to by a majority vote. As chair I do have concerns regarding the admissibility of this motion given that it would vary from the standard voting procedures used in the Assembly and at committee. Standing Order 31 provides that "questions arising in the Assembly shall be decided by a majority of the votes cast." In addition, Standing Order 65(1) provides that "the Standing Orders . . . shall be observed in the committees of the Assembly so far as [they] may be applicable," and goes on to list certain exceptions which are not relevant to the motion in front of us. The committee does not have the authority either by motion or unanimous consent to vary or suspend the operation of the standing orders. Rather, only the Assembly itself has the authority to do so.

Accordingly, this motion is not in order and will not be considered by the committee.

MLA Ganley, go ahead.

**Ms Ganley:** Sorry, Mr. Chair. Just a question with respect to that ruling. I believe that the section that you just read into the record said that a committee should not vary insofar as – I apologize. I can't remember the precise wording, but I think there is precedent for this. I don't think that we are altering the standing orders in any way. I think we are altering their applicability not even to the entire committee, but to this one minor situation, and I think that the public interest in that is pretty heavy. I am interested in the legal opinion that underpins your view that saying "deviate as little as possible" means don't deviate at all. Like, that seems like a peculiar reading to me, so if you could just illuminate that for me, I think that would be helpful.

**The Chair:** Well, thank you, Member. I'll just reiterate my ruling that this motion is not admissible or not in order under Standing Order 31. We want to make sure that our committee will observe the same process under the standing orders as the Assembly. As such, this motion is not in order.

MLA Gray, please go ahead.

**Ms Gray:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Only a comment to the government members on this committee. Although the chair has ruled that we cannot impose a higher standard in this case, of saying that we should all come to an agreement, so this motion is not moving forward, I certainly invite the government members to work with us. This motion is not moving forward. I certainly invite the government members to work with us because, if we can find a candidate that receives unanimous support, that may go an extremely long way for trust in the process. We have talked numerous times already today about the real questions that have arisen.

With that being said, Mr. Chair, there's nothing that stops the committee from setting this as an aspirational goal if not a passed motion.

11:00

**The Chair:** Thank you for those comments, MLA Gray. Much appreciated.

With that, we will – sorry, MLA Ganley. Please go ahead.

**Ms Ganley:** Oh, sorry. That having been ruled out of order, I was going to move another motion. Is that . . .

**The Chair:** Yeah.

**Ms Ganley:** Okay. I would like to move motion 14, which reads as follows, that

the Select Special Committee on Electoral Boundaries not appoint as chair of the independent advisory panel an individual who has in the past 10 years (a) made a contribution within the meaning of the Election Finances and Contributions Disclosure Act to any political party in Alberta, (b) applied to be a candidate for election in Alberta as the candidate for a registered political party within the meaning of the Election Act, (c) served on a political party constituency association in Alberta, or (d) been a member of a provincial public agency, board, or commission.

Essentially, what this is trying to alleviate is the skepticism that Albertans are rightly, I think, feeling right now about this massive departure from the normal legislative and legal process that occurs when we redraw electoral boundaries. By rejecting the commission's legal report, the government has damaged trust in this process, and they have damaged trust that this process at this

committee will be conducted fairly in a transparent and nonpartisan manner. They have also rejected multiple amendments already that attempt to make this more transparent or to ensure that information is on the public record. Therefore, I think it is very critical that Albertans know that these individuals have no political affiliations of any sort. I think that these are basic commitments that the committee can make today to ensure that the chair is above partisan involvement and has not otherwise benefited from a government decision or appointment.

I mean, this does, I think, limit who can serve as chair. I would argue, Mr. Chair, that in this instance it is necessary because of just the peculiar departure from all sort of normal process on this matter but also because, yeah, this person needs to be entirely above partisanship. This is an imposition that is imposed on members of the civil service at high levels. It is something which is imposed upon judges in many ways. In fact, we've seen sort of publicly comments on why judges ought not to be donating to political parties. So, yeah, I think that this just sort of helps with that transparency and nonpartisanship and helps to reassure Albertans.

**The Chair:** All right. Thank you, MLA Ganley.

Are there others wishing to speak to this motion? I see MLA Sawyer's hand, and then MLA Gray. Go ahead, MLA Sawyer.

**Mrs. Sawyer:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Look, we've had a lot of these amendments. The reality is that my colleagues have constantly put forward situations where it's actually limiting our pool, which I just don't understand. We've heard the comments of higher standards but then limiting the pool. I think that it kind of conflicts. I think that what we do when it comes to the applicants should include anyone who meets the requirement that is listed under Government Motion 37.

I think the other problem with that motion is that it eliminates a lot of professionals. You know, it lists provincial agencies, boards. That means anyone who served on a postsecondary board of governors. It limits the number of professional regulators. That would also include the Law Society, so I think there could be an issue there where suddenly we can't appoint a judge.

I don't think that the motion eliminates bias. I think the problem with it is it eliminates expertise. I think it removes thoughtful judgment, and it's just putting too many rigid rules in place. I think it's important that whomever is in there, you know, we have the opportunity to have someone who's highly qualified, and shrinking the pool I think goes against wanting to keep this process at a high level. So I'm sorry. I can't support this motion.

**The Chair:** Thank you, MLA Sawyer.

MLA Gray, please go ahead.

**Ms Gray:** We are talking about who we pick to chair this process, and you will note that we haven't tried to apply this standard to all the members of the panel but the chair of the panel who is going to oversee this. You have rejected our attempts to ensure it is a sitting judge, which means it could be a retired judge. Retired judges are not bound by the same rules about being nonpartisan as a sitting judge. So are the government members comfortable having a chair on this panel who has donated to the UCP in the last year, who has sought nomination to be a candidate for the UCP or another political party?

This particular motion moved by my colleague: obviously, I am strongly in support because I think this passes what I often call the head nod test with Albertans. Should the person chairing the process that is going to redraw our electoral boundaries, a process that has already been brought under serious question because of how strange this process is, the MLA committee and so on, not have

made a political donation? Yes. Should that person not have sought to be a candidate for the government or the Official Opposition? Yes. Serving on a political party constituency association? Yes.

For these reasons, I will support it. I won't belabour the point, but we are trying very hard to improve this inappropriate process that Government Motion 37 has started us down, and at every turn we are being resisted by the government. It just brings up more questions for me about what we are doing here and its legitimacy.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**The Chair:** Thank you, MLA Gray.

Oh, I see MLA Ganley with your hand up. Please go ahead.

**Ms Ganley:** Yes. I would just add that the reason I think that in this case whoever we appoint to chair the panel needs to be nonpolitical and absolutely above reproach in terms of their partisanship – and I'm a partisan. I'm not saying there's anything wrong with partisans. I'm saying that in this instance it is very important to have someone that is nonpartisan, and one of the reasons is that when you read through the report and the comments of the majority and they talk about violations of procedural fairness – the values underlying section 3 of the Charter being violated by the minority report, the allegations that have come forward publicly regarding, you know, those maps being circulated by the Premier's staff ahead of time, them being marked as protected government documents that were submitted by MLAs to the committee – I think it raises some significant concerns. So I think holding the chair's appointment to the highest standard is a good idea.

Thank you.

**The Chair:** Thank you, members, for your comments on this motion.

I'm now prepared to call this vote. All those in favour of the motion, please say aye. All right. Any opposed, please indicate.

That motion is defeated.

**Ms Gray:** Mr. Chair, can we have a recorded vote?

**The Chair:** I anticipated such an occurrence. Of course. A recorded vote has been requested. I will first ask those in the room who are in favour of the motion to raise their hand, and then the committee clerk will call the names of those who have raised their hand.

11:10

**Mr. Roth:** Hon. Ms Gray, hon. Ms Ganley.

**The Chair:** All right. I will now ask for those opposed to the motion to please raise their hand.

**Mr. Roth:** Mr. Wiebe, Mrs. Sawyer, Ms de Jonge.

Mr. Chair, total for the motion, 2; total against, 3.

**The Chair:** All right.

That motion has been defeated.

All right. I think we are still on agenda 5. MLA Ganley, please go ahead.

**Ms Ganley:** I have another motion, Mr. Chair. I'd like to move to motion 15, which reads as follows, that

the Select Special Committee on Electoral Boundaries interview in a public meeting of the committee all candidates nominated for the position of chair of the independent advisory panel.

A lot of these amendments, Mr. Chair, sort of strike at the same thing because we find ourselves in an unprecedented process that has thrown out the legal, public, and legislated process that has been used continuously throughout Alberta, that has received a majority

map, which constitutes the decision of the commission, and decided to disregard that map. For the public normally MLAs would get to vote on this twice. There would be a motion to concur, and MLAs could debate that openly in the Legislature. Then that would be turned into an act, which would then be introduced, and MLAs could debate that. None of those things occurred in this case.

I have multiple other colleagues. Between all of us we have – whatever – 87 minus six, so 81 other colleagues who equally represent constituents and deserved to make those representations on the record. They were not provided with that opportunity, and those Albertans who are represented by those MLAs did not have the opportunity to have their concerns represented on the record. This is a significant deviation from the normal process in a way that cuts Albertans off from being represented, also in a way that may cut Albertans who made submissions to the original boundaries commission off. We don't know. We are here engaged in this process, and we can't find out whether or not that map will be the starting point, which I think is a pretty significant issue.

I also think that we should sort of treat this process with a high degree of transparency given that Albertans' rights are at stake. I think it is not unreasonable to be able to interview individuals on the record and to have the public be able to form independent judgments about that. I think Albertans should be aware of concerns that members of this committee may have about candidates for the role of chair.

Thank you.

**The Chair:** Thank you, MLA Ganley.

Is there anyone else looking to – oh, MLA de Jonge, please go ahead.

**Ms de Jonge:** Thank you, Chair. Happy to speak to motion 15. Some of it is actually a reiteration of comments I made to earlier motions by the hon. member. You know, first, as I've said previously, interviews and committee deliberations on personnel appointments are always held in camera. I think this motion is actually a significant departure from the normal practice of committees. I think it's important that we're able to have these discussions in camera out of respect to applicants when we're discussing their suitability.

But, you know, I'll close on one other point. As I read this motion, I actually think this is quite unfair to candidates because those that are interviewing later would be able to better prepare for their interviews by watching the interviews of those candidates that interviewed earlier. I think that's unfair to the application process and to candidates.

Those are my concerns with motion 15, and I'll be voting against it.

**The Chair:** Thank you, MLA de Jonge.

MLA Gray, please go ahead.

**Ms Gray:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. This committee is a significant departure from the normal process. It just is. This is unprecedented. We are trying to bring a little bit more legitimacy.

To the member's second point, I imagine we would have a meeting to do interviews. There would be candidates perhaps in the waiting room, and then we might have a conversation with one or two or three. I don't think your second concern should prevent us from doing the interview on the public record so that people can hear what somebody responds when we ask questions about partisanship or when we ask questions about their understanding of what representation means. You will see in the discussion that's already in this current Electoral Boundaries Commission majority

report, that the Legislature should have adopted, an incredibly important amount of history and background, analysis of legal judgments, and so on.

I am picturing when someone is being chosen for the Supreme Court. They go through a public at-committee interview process. Perhaps this is not something we typically do in the Alberta Legislature, but in this case we absolutely should. I don't think this would be a roadblock to someone who wants to lend their expertise to this process. That's why I will be supporting the motion from my colleague.

**The Chair:** All right. Thank you, MLA Gray.

MLA Ganley.

**Ms Ganley:** Yes. I will be brief. Just to follow up on that, I think we should be a little less concerned about what is respectful to – I mean, I don't think it is disrespectful to someone who is putting their name forward to stand for public office to be interviewed on the record and to put that on the record. I don't think that that is disrespectful at all. Even in the event that that were, perhaps, I think, Mr. Chair, I would suggest to government members that we should be a little less concerned about the individuals who are putting their names forward to hold public office and what their experience is and a little more concerned about the public and their right to vote and whether that is being disrespected.

Thank you.

**The Chair:** Thank you.

Is there anyone else on this motion?

Seeing none, I am prepared to call a vote. All those in favour of this motion, please say aye. All right. Are there any opposed?

That motion is defeated.

All right. I think we can put a bow on agenda item 5 unless there's someone else.

All right. I'm going to move us on to agenda item 6, which is budget for the independent advisory panel; (a) is remuneration expenses. As discussed previously, the committee is authorized to pay remuneration as well as travelling and living expenses of independent advisory panel advisers. I'd now like to open the floor to a discussion related to this topic. MLA Wiebe, I see your hand. Please go ahead.

**Mr. Wiebe:** I'd like to move a motion, Mr. Chair, if I can.

**The Chair:** Go ahead.

**Mr. Wiebe:** I'd like to move that

the Select Special Committee on Electoral Boundaries approve remuneration for independent advisory panel advisers other than the chair after they are appointed for conducting the business of the intent of advisory panel as follows: (a) \$300 a day for each adviser that serves less than four hours and (b) \$600 for each day the adviser serves for more than four hours and less than six hours and (c) \$800 for each day the member serves for over eight hours in that day.

**The Chair:** Okay. Thank you.

MLA Sawyer.

**Mrs. Sawyer:** I think you've already got it.

**The Chair:** I see your hand. Go ahead. Yeah.

**Mrs. Sawyer:** I'd like to make a friendly amendment to that motion.

**The Chair:** Okay.

**Mrs. Sawyer:** Just because I couldn't help but notice a slight error under (c).

**The Chair:** Proceed.

**Mrs. Sawyer:** Under (c) presently it reads, "\$800 for each day the member serves for over eight hours." That should say "six" because above it says, "less than six hours."

**The Chair:** Okay. Thank you for that. Just quickly, procedurally here, I jumped the gun earlier in the meeting, but we do need permission to entertain an amendment from the floor.

MLA Sawyer, can you ask the committee for permission to move an amendment from the floor?

11:20

**Mrs. Sawyer:** My apologies. To the committee: are you amenable to me making an amendment to the motion that's on the floor?

**The Chair:** I think she's already indicated what that would be.

**Mrs. Sawyer:** Now that you know what it's going to be.

**The Chair:** All those who would be supportive of this, please indicate – or is there any discussion first? Okay. I don't see any.

Okay. All those in favour of entertaining this amendment, please indicate so. Any opposed? Okay. So we can now accept this amendment.

If you just want to reiterate very quickly what you were . . .

**Mrs. Sawyer:** Yeah. The motion under (b) says, "\$600 for each day the adviser serves more than four hours and less than six hours." So under (c), "\$800 for each day the member serves," I am proposing that the amendment strike "eight," and it should say "for over six hours" in that day.

Otherwise, we've got a two-hour gap that we didn't account for.

**The Chair:** It sounds like the table here is preparing that update.

Maybe in the interest of time I'll ask if there's any discussion or questions on that amendment. Okay. Doesn't sound like it, so we will wait.

**Ms Ganley:** Sorry. While we're discussing how to do this, I just note that item (c) also says "member" rather than "adviser."

**The Chair:** I've just been advised that that is an editorial change that can be made, so that will proceed, but I don't think we need to read it into the record.

MLA Sawyer, does the proposal on the screen align with your intent?

**Mrs. Sawyer:** Well, if you want to be technical, to keep the wording the same, the wording said "serves for over six." I don't know if you want me to be very particular. You've technically changed some words. If that's what it has to be, I am fine with it.

**Ms Robert:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. I think what we're trying to do is that if we leave it as just over, that creates a gap in (b) because (b) says, "less than six hours." Like, at six hours is a gap. So if we just say, "six hours or more," that covers the gap.

**Mrs. Sawyer:** Perfect. Yeah. I'm okay with that. Thank you.

**The Chair:** Okay. I think we're good to go.

Unless there's any last-minute discussion, I will call a vote on this amendment to this motion. All those in favour, please say aye. Any opposed? All right.

That amendment is carried.

Now we will return to the main motion as amended. Is there any discussion? MLA Ganley, please go ahead.

**Ms Ganley:** Yeah. I just think I'd like to put on record my concerns about the use of public funds in this case. We went through the normal process. The normal process had the normal outcome. It cost a million dollars. I think, because this is an important public process, it will cost money, but I really feel like throwing out the work that resulted from that million dollars and asking the Alberta taxpayer to spend more money to engage in what is, in my view, an illegitimate process is disrespectful to the taxpayer. I would just like to put that on record, not as an objection specifically to this but just as an objection generally to the fact that we are doing this at all and to the fact that this highlights the fact that this illegitimate process will cost more money.

**The Chair:** Thank you.

We're getting a little tight for time. Are there any other comments? Seeing none, I am prepared to call the question. All right. Just for super procedural fairness all those in favour of the motion, please say aye. Any opposed?

That motion as amended is carried.

Are there any other items for agenda 6?

**Mr. Wiebe:** Chair, I have one more motion if you don't mind.

**The Chair:** Okay. MLA Wiebe, please go ahead.

**Mr. Wiebe:** Okay. I move that

the Select Special Committee on the Electoral Boundaries reimburse the travelling and living expenses of the independent advisory panel's advisers that they incur in relation to carrying out the independent advisory panel's mandate in accordance with the Legislative Assembly of Alberta travel, meal, and hospitality expense policy.

**The Chair:** All right. Having heard that motion by MLA Wiebe, is there any discussion?

Seeing none, all those in favour of the motion, please say aye. Any opposed? All right.

That motion is carried.

Final agenda item under 6 is a conversation on staff support. Is there anyone who would like to make a comment on that agenda item? MLA Sawyer, please go ahead.

**Mrs. Sawyer:** Yeah. It's a bit premature talking about hiring staff, but I just thought it would be important to talk about the panel being able to have possible staff support should they need it and I thought maybe to have a bit of a discussion on that in case they need to request that of the committee, that we sort of touched on it a little bit.

**The Chair:** Okay. So you'd just like to put that on record, but you're not moving a motion or anything?

**Mrs. Sawyer:** That's correct. I'm not moving a motion. I wanted to mention the possibility of them needing that, having that be available to them.

**The Chair:** Okay. Thank you for those comments, MLA Sawyer.

Anyone else wishing to join in under 6(b)?

All right. I can hopefully breeze us through the rest here. Is there any other business to discuss under agenda item 7?

Seeing none, agenda item 8, which is the date of the next meeting. Seeing how our committee has set a deadline for expressions of interest at 3 p.m. on Thursday, May 14, it is the view of the chair that the next meeting would logically be held on Friday, May 15,

but I would open the floor to any discussion on that. It doesn't sound like it, so the meeting will be at the call of the chair, but I just wanted to put on the record that that will likely be called for Friday, May 15.

All right. It looks like we have made it through our agenda with one minute to spare. Thank you, members, for your important discussions and contributions. I would now ask for a motion to

adjourn. MLA Wiebe. All those in favour of MLA Wiebe's motion to adjourn, please say aye. Any opposed? Seeing none, that motion is carried.

This meeting is adjourned.

[The committee adjourned at 11:30 a.m.]





