



Legislative Assembly of Alberta

The 31st Legislature  
Second Session

Standing Committee  
on  
Legislative Offices

Thursday, January 29, 2026  
10 a.m.

Transcript No. 31-2-4

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

**Standing Committee on Legislative Offices**

Lunty, Brandon G., Leduc-Beaumont (UC), Chair  
de Jonge, Chantelle, Chestermere-Strathmore (UC), Deputy Chair  
Dyck, Nolan B., Grande Prairie (UC), Acting Deputy Chair

Chapman, Amanda, Calgary-Beddington (NDP)  
Cyr, Scott J., Bonnyville-Cold Lake-St. Paul (UC)  
Johnson, Jennifer, Lacombe-Ponoka (UC)\*  
Lovely, Jacqueline, Camrose (UC)  
Miyashiro, Rob, Lethbridge-West (NDP)  
Petrovic, Chelsae, Livingstone-Macleod (UC)  
Rowswell, Garth, Vermilion-Lloydminster-Wainwright (UC)\*\*  
Sawyer, Tara, Olds-Didsbury-Three Hills (UC)\*\*\*  
Shepherd, David, Edmonton-City Centre (NDP)  
Wright, Peggy K., Edmonton-Beverly-Clareview (NDP)

\* substitution for Scott Cyr

\*\* substitution for Jaqueline Lovely

\*\*\* substitution for Chantelle de Jonge

**Legislative Officers**

Kevin Brezinski	Ombudsman, Public Interest Commissioner
Gordon McClure	Chief Electoral Officer
Diane McLeod	Information and Privacy Commissioner
Shawn McLeod	Ethics Commissioner
Terri Pelton	Child and Youth Advocate
W. Doug Wylie	Auditor General

**Office of the Auditor General Participants**

Loulou Eng	Senior Financial Officer
Eric Leonty	Assistant Auditor General
Phil Peters	Legislative Audit and General Counsel

**Support Staff**

Shannon Dean, KC	Clerk
Trafton Koenig	Law Clerk
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>

**10 a.m.****Thursday, January 29, 2026**

[Mr. Lundy in the chair]

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

My name is Brandon Lundy, MLA for Leduc-Beaumont and chair of this committee. I'd ask that members and those joining the committee at the table introduce themselves for the record, and then we will hear from those joining us remotely. I'll start to my right.

**Mrs. Johnson:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Jennifer Johnson, MLA for Lacombe-Ponoka.

**Mr. Peters:** Phil Peters, general counsel to the Auditor General.

**Mr. Leonty:** Eric Leonty, Assistant Auditor General.

**Mr. Wylie:** Doug Wylie, AG.

**Ms Eng:** Loulou Eng, senior financial officer.

**Ms Wright:** Peggy Wright, MLA, Edmonton-Beverly-Clareview.

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

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

**Ms Rempel:** Good morning. Jody Rempel, committee clerk.

**The Chair:** All right. Those joining us online: I see the first on my list is MLA Dyck. Please go ahead.

**Mr. Dyck:** MLA Nolan Dyck for Grande Prairie.

**Mrs. Petrovic:** You know what, Chair? I'm Chelsae Petrovic, MLA for Livingstone-Macleod.

**The Chair:** Thank you, MLA Petrovic. The shyest amongst my colleagues decided to jump in.

MLA Rowswell, are you hearing us all right?

**Mr. Rowswell:** Yeah. You betcha. It's MLA Rowswell from the constituency of Vermilion-Lloydminster-Wainwright.

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

**Ms Chapman:** Amanda Chapman, MLA, Calgary-Beddington.

**Member Miyashiro:** Good morning. Rob Miyashiro, MLA for Lethbridge-West.

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

Oh, we just had an addition. Go ahead and introduce yourself.

**Mr. Koenig:** Hi. I'm Trafton Koenig, Law Clerk.

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

For the record I would like to note the following substitutions. Mr. Rowswell is substituting for Ms Lovely, Mrs. Johnson will be substituting for Mr. Cyr, Mrs. Sawyer is substituting for Ms de Jonge, and Mr. Dyck will be acting deputy chair.

A few quick housekeeping items to address before we turn to the business at hand. Please note that the microphones are operated by *Hansard*, so there's no need to turn them on or off. Committee

proceedings are being live streamed on the Internet and broadcast on Alberta Assembly TV. We ask that members participating remotely should ensure that they are prepared to speak or vote when called upon, and videoconference participants are encouraged to have their cameras on, if possible, when speaking. Also, please remember to set your cellphones and other devices to silent.

That moves us to our next item, the agenda. A draft meeting agenda was circulated. Does anyone have any proposed changes, or would a member move to approve our agenda? That is moved by MLA Johnson. Any discussion? All those in the room in favour, please say aye. All those online in favour, please say aye. Any opposed? Hearing none, that motion is carried.

We'll move on to the minutes from the previous meeting. We also have a set of minutes from our last meeting. Are there any errors or omissions that someone would like to raise? Seeing none, would a member like to move to approve the minutes? Moved by MLA Shepherd that the Standing Committee on Legislative Offices approve the minutes as distributed of its meeting held on December 12, 2025. All those in favour in the room, please say aye. All those online? Are there any opposed? All right. Seeing none, that motion is carried.

We'll turn to our next agenda item, which is the office of the Auditor General request for review of approved '26-27 budget estimates. On January 23 this committee received a letter from the Auditor General asking to reconsider the budget estimate approved for his office on December 12, 2025. The Auditor General is asking for an increase of \$1,483,000. This addition would bring the total estimate for the office to \$37,960,000. A copy of the office's original request was also included with the materials for this meeting.

Mr. Wylie and his colleagues have joined us today to support their request. I would like to begin by inviting them to make opening remarks no longer than five minutes in length, and I will then open the floor for questions from committee members. Mr. Wylie, please proceed.

**Mr. Wylie:** Well, thank you, Chair and committee members. I really appreciate the opportunity, and thank you for considering our request. You know, as you indicated in your comments, Chair, we did write to the committee on January 3, 2026. In that letter we outlined our request for the authority to spend an additional \$1.483 million to provide the necessary available funding to cover agent costs associated with auditing the new health care organizations. If it turns out that we do not need all the approved funding, we will return any unspent funds, which is consistent with prior practice of our office. If you look back at the funding and how we've handled that, Chair and committee members, you will see that there is a significant practice of returning funds. What we are looking for is the authority to spend. We have a multiyear contract that we're looking at entering into, and again, before we enter into this particular contract, which is a multiyear contract, we want to make sure that we have the authority before we do that.

I'm going to actually ask Eric to provide the committee with a few more comments, so I'm just going to turn it right over to Eric.

**Mr. Leonty:** Right on. Thank you, Doug.

Good morning, Chair and committee members. I'd like to provide just a little bit more detail on what has recently transpired and why we're following up with the committee here today for this amendment. Following the December 12 decision regarding our budget for 2026-27, our office did evaluate the impact on our operations. Our office does run on a very lean budget that is directly aligned to the audit work we are mandated to carry out. Being requested to take on additional audits in the health sector has

created a resource issue that is very difficult to respond to without the support of additional contracted agents, particularly with the province's June 30 reporting deadline. We haven't received any indication that the June 30 deadline can be adjusted, so that does bring us here to today.

For the past month we've continued to meet and consult very closely with the new health agency CEOs, the deputy ministers that are responsible for those agencies, the Controller as well as the deputy minister of Treasury Board and Finance in order to find a reasonable path forward that can meet the needs of all parties. It was clear from those discussions that there is a strong desire for our office to be the auditor as this is the most cost-effective approach and one that best supports the public interest, and we do agree. As a direct result of those discussions and the clear preference expressed for our office to complete this work, we were encouraged to bring this amendment forward to the committee, and this is what we have before you. Collectively, we agree that this represents a sustainable and reasonable approach for the committee to consider. We remain committed to finding a path through the situation, and we hope you will help us and those we audit achieve the desired outcome.

Again, thank you for your willingness to meet with us today. We would be pleased to answer any questions that you have. Thank you, Chair and committee members.

**The Chair:** All right. Thank you for presenting that information.

We will move on to questions from our committee members. I see MLA Shepherd with his hand up. We will go to him first, and then I saw MLA Sawyer's hand online, so we'll go to her next. Go ahead, MLA Shepherd.

**Mr. Shepherd:** Thank you, Mr. Chair, and through you thank you to Mr. Wylie and his team for meeting with us today. I would apologize that you are put in the position where you have to do this. I would recognize that I think this is the third time you have come to this committee to request the same funding for the same work. That's over a period of about two and a half, almost three months, and I'm sorry that you've been put in the position by the decisions that were made by government members of the committee.

Now that you are here, I think it's important that we clearly understand sort of the situation we're in, so I sat down and went through the timeline of what's happened. I ended up with about two and a half pages in relatively small type, and out of respect for Mr. Wylie and his team's time I will not go through the entirety of it. I will simply note that they came to us at the meeting on November 3 having requested \$899,000 to cover the costs of hiring external agents to do this work, and at that time Mr. Wylie was quite clear. He said, "We simply do not have the funding to do the audit work that's required; hence, why we are here." This was brought forward again, after government members turned that down, on December 5. We again heard the same from the Auditor General, Mr. Wylie, and his team, and he noted that if his office was unable to complete these audits themselves, if they did not have the funding and the manpower, they would have to ask the respective agencies to find their own auditors.

**10:10**

Now, through you, Mr. Chair, to Mr. Wylie it's my understanding from the letter that he sent that that is, in fact, the process he had to go through. Mr. Wylie and his team did go forward and indeed went above and beyond. They didn't just go and tell these agencies and organizations to go figure it out; they provided them with support to explore this. As I think Mr. Leonty just explained, they then met with the DMs, CEOs for health and the respective agencies as well

as the deputy minister of Treasury Board and Finance, again demonstrating, I think, the due diligence that the Auditor General's office continually shows even in the face, I think, of some significant challenges that have been put in their way.

I was wondering, through you to Mr. Wylie: can you just confirm that what we've just sort of talked about has been the process? He went and he spoke with all these folks. Can they give us just a bit more detail about why it is that the deputy ministers and the CEOs of these agencies felt it was essential that the Auditor General's office, that Mr. Wylie and his team, be the ones to spearhead this and to hire the external agencies and work with them to conduct these audits?

**Mr. Wylie:** I'll start, Chair, and then I'm going to ask Eric to supplement because Eric has been the one dealing with the agencies.

I think at the highest level it makes perfect sense for our office to do these audits. The way the legislation is set up, though, under Bill 20 is that there is an appointment process. Generally speaking, this is different than our normal audits where we're the statutory auditor. In any event, I don't want to go off onto that too much. I think from a practical perspective it certainly makes sense. This is a significant amount of public spend within health care. Our role as an independent audit office is to provide that assurance to the Legislative Assembly on the operations of the government, and as I just said, this sector is a significant spend of the government, so it makes perfect sense to do that.

There's a practical perspective as an audit office and auditing the consolidated financial statements of the office. There are standards that manage all of our work, and we follow the generally accepted auditing standards. We are registered in the area of – I'll refer to it in the old terminology of public practice; that is, we're registered and authorized to provide audit opinions under the authority of the regulatory body in which we operate. Under those standards we are referred to as a group auditor. What that means is that ultimately the responsibility to sign off on the consolidated financial statements imposes certain professional responsibilities on a group auditor. That involves, you know, involvement in the audit process and understanding the audit work done that's in the segments that make their way into the consolidated financial statements. As group auditor it just makes absolutely perfect sense for our office to do that work. We know exactly what work is being done at the component level that is within these organizations themselves. Hence, the Auditor General can rely on his team knowing the work that was being performed to give the Auditor General the comfort necessary to sign off on the consolidated statements.

Notwithstanding that, just practically it brings efficiency to the process because as a group auditor there is a fair bit of, as I said, responsibilities, which requires a lot of communication if there are other auditors involved. I'm going to refer to it as administrative – it's more than that; it's professional responsibilities – but there's a lot of additional work that's involved when you have to deal with the component auditors, which are referred to under the standards.

Practically, I think, through you, Chair, it just makes sense that we are the auditor given the professional responsibilities and then just given the notion of the health spend is a significant component of the province's spend. It makes sense given the Auditor General's role that the Auditor General would be involved in the audit of those organizations. That's why we support the notion that we should be the auditor, but then comes in another area of responsibility. When an auditor is through the appointment process, there are certain professional responsibilities that the auditor must comply with before accepting an appointment as an auditor. The auditor must ensure a number of factors, and one of those is that there are

sufficient funds to complete a quality audit. So in the private-sector world and in the not-for-profit world, if you're on a board or an audit committee, it's one of the first things, quite frankly, that an audit committee would be asking an independent auditor: do you have sufficient funds to do an audit?

So all of this coming together, Chair, I think goes part in part to the dilemma we're faced with right now. I believe that we've heard from management that it's probably the best thing for us to do the work. We believe it's the best thing for us to do the work. We're left with the dilemma of ensuring we have funding before we sign a multiyear contract with an agent to help us do this work.

With respect to the specific dialogue and some of the interaction, I'm going to ask Eric to refer to that.

**Mr. Leonty:** Sure. Subsequent to the December 12 meeting we took the result of that back and determined what might be possible as far as, you know, resources and funding is concerned. One of the complicating factors is that a significant amount of the work has to happen in the next four to six months, and that obviously carries into the next fiscal period. So there's a considerable amount of year-end audit work that happens in the April, May, June time frame.

One of the things we quickly recognize is that we wouldn't have the resources to be able to contract agents or to be able to do that work in-house for those audits. Just before the break we communicated that to the health agencies. We just felt that they needed to know as quickly as possible because time is ticking on the year and the ability to get those audits done. It would be most fair to them that they would have an opportunity to consider what that would mean, to be looking for a different auditor to make sure that those services were complete, with a commitment to meet with them early in the new year to discuss what the implications were.

Doug mentioned that we are the group auditor, but also we've been interacting with these agencies, and we really wanted to help along with that process, whatever it is, whoever serves that role, to make sure that the shared objective of complete accurate audits is complete right up to the government of Alberta level. We did meet with those agencies in the first week as well as the respective deputy ministers, the Controller's office, and the deputy minister of Treasury Board and Finance, as I stated before, and certainly with some incredulity as far as, like, how could we not be the auditor? We agreed we should be. That makes sense, but we ultimately need the resources to be able to ensure that those audits are done under standards and that we could afford to contract with the agent as we, you know, currently have an unsigned contract.

So we, through those conversations, then committed to reaching back out to the committee and exploring what an additional option might be to close that gap and be able to get the work done, recognizing that time is of the essence.

That's a little bit of a summary of what transpired over the last several weeks.

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

Do you have a quick follow-up here?

**Mr. Shepherd:** Thank you. Through you, then, to Mr. Wylie and his team, Mr. Chair, I think it's very important that we as members of the committee understand the implications of the decisions that we make, I think, both for the larger public, for the budget, and also for the public servants who are tasked with carrying out those decisions, sometimes under considerable duress.

So, respectfully, I just wanted to ask Mr. Wylie and his team, through you, Mr. Chair: can you just give us a sense of how much additional and extra work it has taken to sort of complete this process because of the process we have been through with the

committee again, having to come here three times, prepare three different presentations, go through this process basically to arrive back where we began? And, Mr. Chair, again, this is not a political question. This is simply, I think, important, that we understand the implications of our decisions to ensure that we as committee members and as elected representatives make good decisions in the future.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**Mr. Wylie:** Chair, through you, thank you for the question. You know, honestly, I will answer the question, but I really want to look forward. Eric ended off with this, you know, to move forward in the best interest. Time has not only ticked; time is gone. We had staff that were prepared and actually needed to start work. We had 25 staff ready to go with the agent in the beginning of November, from November to December. We are now coming up to the end of January. The timeline for the consolidated financial statements is to have that done in June. As I say, you can see the time that has moved along.

10:20

I'm not going to get into all of the to-ing and fro-ing and the costs associated with that, Chair. What we are looking for here today is, again, seeking the approval so that we can move forward in good conscience accepting the engagement, recognizing we will have sufficient stable funding to be able to enter into a multiyear contract. By the way, I have had personal discussions with the managing partner of that firm, and they need a multiyear contract because, to the point, if they do not have a multiyear contract – they have already invested significant time in this in anticipation that we would have been able to move forward in November – the cost would go up substantially. They're prepared to make the investment, but time is of essence.

I guess that's the way I would answer the member's question as best I could recognizing, I think, where we've been, but more importantly right now, where we need to go and the decisions that need to happen today, going forward. Hopefully, that will answer the member's question sufficiently. Thank you.

**The Chair:** Thank you.

We have a bit of a list, so in a bit of a time crunch, we'll keep going.

MLA Sawyer, please go ahead.

**Mrs. Sawyer:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Through you, I wanted to ask if you could walk the committee through why the office determined that a revised baseline budget request was preferable at this stage rather than proceeding with a supplemental request later in the fiscal year if the approved funding proved to be insufficient.

**Mr. Wylie:** Well, sure. It's a little difficult to ask for a supplemental estimate before we're even into the fiscal year of the subject of what we're talking about. What we're referring to is a budget for '26-27. We're asking because that budget has not yet been approved by the Legislative Assembly. We're asking for an amendment of that, which we believe is the most efficient way to deal with this. I mean, I guess a person technically could wait until fiscal '26-27 and then come before this committee with a supplement.

The challenge we're dealing with right now is that we do not have a contract signed. I hope the members can understand that with the level of uncertainty that has been experienced thus far, I think, you know, the contractor is looking for some certainty of funding before moving forward. What we would be requesting is to enter into something where the individual and the firm knows that we do

not have the funding and there's no guarantee. There's no guarantee that that supplement would be approved. That's a future event.

Listen, we've had some dialogue, as Eric said, with the management folk, and this was determined, from our perspective anyway – I'm not going to speak from the management side – as probably the most efficient way to do it. It's a quick adjustment. The estimates have not been – I don't know where they're at in the finalization process, but I'm led to understand that it could be a very efficient way to deal with this and probably the most efficient.

Personally, our practice has not been to enter into contracts unless we know that we have the funding to enter into those contracts. We don't think that's a good contracting practice or process, to be entering into multiyear contracts when we do not know if we're going to have the funding. Phil could speak to that a little bit more from the perspective of our contracting process, but overall this was determined to be the most cost-effective approach to deal with it.

Again, what we are asking the committee for today is the authority, just the authority, to spend. I assure the committee that if the money is not spent, not needed, we will return it, just as we have done in the years gone by. Hopefully, that, Chair, helps answer the committee.

**The Chair:** Thank you.

MLA Sawyer, did you have a follow-up?

**Mrs. Sawyer:** Yeah, I do. Thank you very much. The core mandate of your office's responsibilities is to carry out a financial audit. This committee approved about 96 per cent of your budget request, but from your request you've highlighted that if this additional adjustment to your budget estimates isn't approved, you won't be able to carry out the important aspect of your core duty. So my question is: how did your office determine to alienate this aspect of your job? Are there more important acts that your office is doing, more important than this? And how does your office determine its priorities when faced with choices and limited resources?

**Mr. Wylie:** Okay. I'll try and go back and revisit some of the things we've already discussed with this committee in the past. If you look at our budget, the budget that we presented on December 5, and the discussion that ensued, we went through a bottom-up approach to our budget, that is, every line item in our budget. Now, the two substantive points in our budget are salaries and contracted costs, and those contracted costs relate predominantly to dealing with our agents. Those are where we physically do not have the resources internally, within the office, to do the audits that we're required to do.

When we talked to the committee back then, we indicated that the most likely savings, if we were required to do that, would require us to go back and look at cancelling potential contracts and changing the timing of when we did the audits. The major issue here, in part, is the timelines that we have to do the audits, and that is driven by when we need the resources. In any event, we committed internally that we would do that. We went through again, looking at our portfolio book of work that we already do and the changes that we would have to make there to those organizations, and then we had this request. So right now we are not doing the audits of the health care organizations. Under the legislation that exists now, those individual organizations have the authority to appoint their own auditors.

The legislation that we're operating under: when the legislation went through, the will of those proposing the legislation was that they wanted an appointment process. I can tell you that my office wrote back on Bill 20 suggesting that we should be the statutory auditor. Deliberations occurred, I guess, and, in any event, the standing legislation as it is right now is that there's a process for

appointment of an auditor for these new health care organizations. So we had discussions as a team, went through our book of work, and this was the approach that was proposed.

Eric, did you want to supplement? You have more insight on this.

**Mr. Leonty:** Maybe just to reinforce the notion that the timing of this is a very big driver. So as far as Doug said, agent resources; we also use temporary services during the year-end time frame. Those are potential pockets where we could say: well, we'll take that in-house, and we'll do that at a different point in time, say, during the summer months.

As we indicated in the opening comments, the deadline for the financial statements for the government of Alberta and audited financial statements is June 30, and there really isn't an appetite to stray from that. I think, you know, it's really important and great that we can get timely financial results audited out in time. While the percentage maybe on an overall basis might feel small, it's a significant impact when we need those resources the most. It's really the structures around delivering on those timelines. We bring in a lot of external help to meet that. I mentioned before that sort of the March, April, May, June time frame is really particularly heavy on the financial audit side.

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

We've lost a hand online. I have two more online. Just to make sure our committee does get a chance for deliberations on this, I might cap it at the two I see, and that would be MLA Chapman and then MLA Miyashiro. So MLA Chapman, please go ahead.

**Ms Chapman:** Thank you, Chair. I'll try to be quick, too. Thank you, Mr. Wylie, for taking the time to come before the committee again. I think that I understand the request and it has been clear, but maybe there has been some confusion in the committee. What I understand is that you're asking for the funds to bring in the resources required to pay for the audits on the new health agencies and corporations created by the government. If those funds are not spent, the request you're making today is not spent for that specific purpose, those funds will be returned. Am I correct in my assessment?

10:30

**Mr. Wylie:** Yes. It's been a long-standing practice for the office that if we do not use the funds, we return the funds.

**Ms Chapman:** And a quick follow-up, Mr. Chair. Is that okay?

**The Chair:** Yep.

**Ms Chapman:** Just going back, you talked about this in your initial budget presentation to us, that doing these audits through the office of the Auditor General is the most cost-efficient approach rather than these organizations having to seek out and bring in some kind of outside firm. Is that still your assessment?

**Mr. Wylie:** There's no doubt in my mind.

**Ms Chapman:** Thank you.

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

We'll go to MLA Miyashiro, please.

**Member Miyashiro:** Great. Thank you, Chair, and thank you, Mr. Wylie, for your great work to date. As a former chair of the audit committee for the city of Lethbridge I truly appreciate the professionalism and service of you and your colleagues. We just heard that time is of the essence to get this work completed, and it's

our understanding that the audit work must be signed off before June 30 in order to be reported by June 30, so does that timeline continue to be the target? And further, what additional pressures does this committee's funding delay create for that audit work to be completed by that target date?

**Mr. Wylie:** Well, the delay is, again, I think, going back to this, the signing of the contract with the firm that's going to be doing the majority of this work. What it means is that the work will be delayed, and quite frankly – I'm going to be candid here – if their approval was today, we've already had a significant impact, and there's no way our office could guarantee that the audits of those individual organizations would meet the timelines.

If it was approved today, we would focus on the significant transactions, the restructuring, all that goes on, the controls and everything else that would allow us to gain comfort on the significant transactions that would make their way into the consolidated statements of the province. That would be our priority. We've heard loud and clear from management that that is, obviously, a priority for them and, quite frankly, for the province.

So there has been a significant impact already, Member, to you through the chair. What we would do is: if we got the approval today, we would then be scrambling to rearrange this to see how we could, again, try and – try and – get the work done to be able to sign off on the consolidated statements of the province. That would be the priority: look at those significant transactions.

**Member Miyashiro:** Great. Thank you.

**The Chair:** Okay. That's great. Thank you.

I think that's it for our questions. We can move on so that we do have time for deliberations.

**Ms Rempel:** Mrs. Petrovic does have her hand up.

**The Chair:** Mrs. Petrovic, is your hand up for a question, or are you hoping to get an early start on the deliberation portion of our agenda?

**Mrs. Petrovic:** Mr. Chair, I was just hoping I could throw in a motion going forward. I know that we're limited on time today, so that was it.

**The Chair:** Okay. Thanks for that clarification.

We'll wrap up the question portion, then. Thank you very much to the Auditor General and his staff and team for joining us today. As mentioned, our committee will be moving on to deliberations at this point. Mr. Wylie, you and your staff are welcome to take your leave if you do have other matters that you need to attend to.

**Mr. Wylie:** Thank you.

**The Chair:** All right. In the interest of time, we do want to make sure the committee does have an opportunity to deliberate any potential motions that would be moved. MLA Petrovic, you were so eager. I wonder if you wouldn't mind kicking us off.

**Mrs. Petrovic:** Oh, Chair, I'd love to do some kicking – that's for sure – but not the time or the place.

I would just like to move that

the Standing Committee on Legislative Offices approve the request by the Auditor General for an increase of \$1.483 million to the office estimates approved by the committee at its December 12, 2025, meeting for a revised estimate of \$37,960,000 for the 2026-2027 fiscal year.

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

Certainly, we would be interested in commentary from the committee members on this motion. MLA Shepherd, I saw your hand up. Please go ahead.

**Mr. Shepherd:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. I'm glad to see this motion, absolutely. Frankly, approving the request of the Auditor General should have been what we saw when we first met back on November 3, really. What we heard today from the Auditor General is basically everything he told us then, which happened precisely the way he said it would happen at every step of the way.

On November 3, when the Auditor General met with us asking for the additional funding he needed to do exactly what he's talking about today, hire these external agencies to assist with the audits of the current restructuring of Alberta Health Services and four newly established health agencies and then later another subsidiary of Alberta Treasury Branches, work he was asked to take on by the ministers responsible for those agencies and those corporations, he was very clear, as I said. "We simply do not have the funding to do the audit work that's required; hence, why we are here."

Despite this, government member Mr. Cyr made a motion to defer it, to kick it down the road for an additional month. At that next meeting on December 5 the Auditor General again requested the same funds for the same work. He noted that, based on what you'd think would be a pretty reasonable expectation that government members would vote to fund the work their own government colleagues were asking the Auditor General to do, he'd already begun planning for that work. He had someone lined up. He had an RFP, and that agency had in fact set aside 22 staff to begin that work in November and December. But the government members chose not to approve that funding, the funding that was needed to do the work their own government minister colleagues had asked the Auditor General to do. That delayed the start of that work from November and December to January, a two-month delay.

Mr. Wylie then noted that if his office couldn't do those audits, if they were unable to complete them, then those health entities, those underlying corporations would have to go to an external auditor. Again, Mr. Wylie told us this on December 5. Government members chose to deny him that funding. And that is precisely what happened, precisely what Mr. Wylie said, as he predicted. He went forward. He went and he worked with them, and as we heard, he and his staff went above and beyond in their due diligence to help those agencies, those corporations through that process, additional work dumped on them by the government members who chose to vote against providing the funding for the Auditor General.

That brings us to today, where the Auditor General is forced to come back here for a third time for the same request, having been proven absolutely correct in every statement he made and prediction about how this would play out. What we heard today is that, in fact, those corporations, those agencies, the deputy ministers are the ones who are saying that we need the Auditor General and his office to conduct these audits, that they are the most cost-effective option to conduct those audits, that, unfortunately, now, as Mr. Wylie just shared, those audits are going to cost us more because government members chose to deny this funding twice over three months and delay that work till now, putting everybody involved under the gun to try to meet these fixed deadlines that, again, everybody was aware of, that, again, the Auditor General was abundantly clear about what the impacts would be.

**10:40**

What do we get today, Mr. Chair? We get these members, Mrs. Sawyer, again echoing the attacks that were made by another member, Mr. Cyr, previously, suggesting that it is the Auditor

General to blame because the Auditor General, in their view, is refusing or unable to do his core duties. What an insult, for these members to make that accusation when the Auditor General has been proven correct at every single step of the way. Everybody else in this system who is involved in this situation has agreed with the Auditor General, but these members in their performative nickel and diming have indeed ended up bringing us right back to the same place, and now it is going to cost Alberta taxpayers potentially more to do this essential work.

Let me be clear, Mr. Chair. When Mrs. Sawyer suggests that there is some fault of the Auditor General for not being able to do this significant increase in his workload without a concurrent increase in his budget to cover the costs and when we have members, you know, previously talking about per capita spending and all that, let's be absolutely clear. Did you know that my office delivers services to my constituents for \$20,500 cheaper than the Member for Livingstone-Macleod? So on a per capita basis I deliver services at a better rate. Now, I do not question the Member for Livingstone-Macleod. I recognize she has different circumstances. She has larger geography. She has other costs that are higher, so it is not the same thing. She is doing more work in some respects, so I do not begrudge her her additional budget to do it.

As Mr. Yao, one of the committee members who denied this funding request, said at the last committee when he voted to deny that, when we talked about the government's creating new pay for their parliamentary secretaries, if you do more work, you should get more pay.

**The Chair:** Okay. Could you please come back to the motion at hand.

**Mr. Shepherd:** I am speaking to the motion at hand, Mr. Chair.

**The Chair:** I'm not sure how MLA Petrovic's budget is to the motion.

**Mr. Shepherd:** I am providing context, Mr. Chair, and comparisons in explaining. These members' arguments in denying this funding to the Auditor General have involved talking about per capita costs, have been talking about accusing the Auditor General of not being able to do significantly more work within the budget provided. I'm providing context on how these members themselves operate when they are talking about their own budgets.

Mr. Chair, the motion we have in front of us today is the right motion. It would have been the right motion back on November 3, and it would have been less cost for the Alberta taxpayer. It would have been significantly less work and inconvenience for the Auditor General and his staff. But this is what we consistently see under this government, the devaluation of the people that actually do the work on behalf of the people of Alberta. They get nickel and dimed while this government appropriates any money it wants for itself. They get accused of not being able to do more with less when this government continually ramps up the stress, the pressure, the cost, the workload of these folks as they try to do this work on behalf of the people of Alberta.

When it comes to the work of the Auditor General, Mr. Chair, Mrs. Sawyer, you know, as we were approaching this motion, suggested the Auditor General perhaps had the wrong priorities in the work that he is doing. Let me be clear. The Auditor General's investigation of this government's wasted money on DynaLife, of the corrupt care scandal is essential work, too. As we talk about this motion funding this additional audit work, this core work, well, the other is core work, too. The Auditor General does not exist solely to do new work that is handed to him by the government, though

that is his duty, and we certainly support that. His job is to do audits and protect the people of Alberta.

While we have seen that this government will choose to play games in the information that's provided to the Auditor General in order to do that core work, creating more time and cost, I'm glad that they have finally come around to recognizing, albeit three months later, at great cost to everybody involved, that this work is essential. It is my sincere hope that this is not going to create too much undue pressure for all those involved. I know the Auditor General and his staff, all the other folks involved are going to step up and do their best. It would be nice to see this government do the same.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**The Chair:** All right. I see MLA Miyashiro. Go ahead.

**Member Miyashiro:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. I won't repeat a lot of what my colleague just said, but I want to just kind of use this as a cautionary tale. The Auditor General came to this committee to do some work that was actually caused by the government, and the government members on this committee said: no; we don't believe that you need the money to do the work that we've actually created for you. The cautionary tale part of this is what I would call: we've just done a callback. My dad had a small plumbing and heating shop, and what really annoyed him a lot was when the work wasn't completed and the plumbers or the HVAC people had to go out and redo the work.

This is a callback. This work should have been done months ago. As my colleagues stated, we put the Auditor General's team behind the eight ball. We put time pressures on them when the arguments haven't changed in three months, but we've decided as a committee, the government members of this committee have decided this wasn't good enough, and now they're capitulating because they have no other choice in order for the AG to do this work.

I will support this motion even though it's a few months late, and I hope we've learned a lesson from this, that the people coming to this committee asking for funding aren't doing it flippantly. They're doing it with a lot of thought and analysis, and maybe we can remember that moving forward.

Thank you very much.

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

I saw MLA Wright.

**Ms Wright:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Of course I, like my colleagues, will indeed be supporting this motion. However, in my view – and I echo the words of my colleagues earlier – this committee's actions, in terms of not approving the proposed estimates as we should have in the first place, have put the Auditor General's work at risk. He told us in no uncertain terms in those two earlier meetings that we had with him that if the supplemental budget, the budget for 2026-27 wasn't approved in full, there would indeed be repercussions, which he and his colleagues went over today, and they are very real. They are very real and extraordinarily serious repercussions to the trust, I think, that Albertans place in this government to do the work on their behalf.

We need to make sure that the consolidated statements, of course, are done up to a professional standard, but more than that, we also need to ensure that the people doing the work of those consolidated statements have the resources in order to complete those statements not just in a timely manner but in a thoroughly professional manner, to ensure that they are doing the work that is required of them by their professional standards and to uphold their own professional ethics and competencies, to say nothing of the legislation which they are operating under.

He spoke to us today, and when he said that there is no way to guarantee that they would meet the timelines, what that means is that when they're looking at the sort of lead up to those consolidated statements for these new health entities, they're going to have to, kind of, I guess, compress the audit that they might normally do so that there is in fact enough trust in those audited statements. And speaking of priorities, he spoke about looking primarily at transactions and restructuring and controls. He spoke of talking to the CEOs of those agencies and the deputy ministers of those agencies, and that's what they need. He spoke about those agencies themselves, understanding that to empower the Auditor General to do this work is indeed the most cost-effective for everyone.

We could have done this, Mr. Chair, a month ago, in December. We could have done this then, and then he would have had the stability to hire that contracting agency with that multiyear plan that they have obviously thought a great deal about. We could have provided stability for the office, for the contractor, as well as to the agencies themselves and to all Albertans. Instead, we took some time both in this meeting and previous meetings . . .

**Mrs. Petrovic:** Mr. Chair, if I may. We're getting to the point of a point of order, 23(c). We're getting to the point of persistent and needless repetition of this. At this point, you know, I'm not hearing any arguments against the motion that I put forward. Unless there's something new, I'm hoping that we can either have something new be explained or call the question. We're getting pretty repetitive here.

10:50

**The Chair:** Are you calling a point of order, MLA Petrovic, or just making a comment?

**Mrs. Petrovic:** You know, I'm sort of just making a comment. We're getting pretty close . . .

**The Chair:** Sure. We are tight for time. I appreciate the member's commentary on this important motion, but I do think we should call the question.

I will ask first those in the room . . .

**Mr. Shepherd:** Mr. Chair, under 23 – give me one moment here. Basically, under the standing order that allows us to ask a chair or the Speaker to explain their ruling, what we just saw was not the raising of a point of order, in which case it was highly inappropriate, indeed unparliamentary, for a member to interrupt another member. That is not something that is allowed. That is not something that is parliamentary procedure. If she wanted to speak, she needed to raise an actual point of order.

Mr. Chair, I would have to ask you to provide some reason or justification for why you are restricting the free speech of our members who were speaking directly on topic. There was no lack of relevance. Ms Wright was simply taking a moment to explain her own opinion in certainly far shorter time than was allotted to me.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**The Chair:** All right. Thank you for those comments. Perhaps it was a little procedural confusion. In light of the fact that there was no point of order called, MLA Wright, if you do have some concluding comments, please go ahead and make them.

**Ms Wright:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. One of the points that I was trying to make was that this motion didn't have to happen today. We could simply have in December approved the budget estimates of this officer so that he could have done the work then, so that he wouldn't be, as he says, scrambling. Of course I am in favour of this motion – of course I am – but I really, really want to ask why we are doing this now instead of when we could have done it a month and a half ago. I don't understand.

**The Chair:** Thank you.

Now we will call the question. Starting in the room here, all those in favour of the motion, please indicate so. All right. We'll go online. Do we go one by one online?

**Ms Rempel:** No. It's just a voice vote.

**The Chair:** It's just a voice vote, right? Yeah. Okay.

Online, all those in favour, please say aye. All right. In the room, are there any opposed? Online, are there any opposed? All right.

That motion is carried.

We'll quickly turn to the rest of our agenda. Are there any other items for discussion under other business?

Seeing none, we'll move to the next meeting date, which will be held at the call of the chair.

That brings us to adjournment. Would a member like to move an adjournment?

**Mr. Shepherd:** So moved.

**The Chair:** Moved by MLA Shepherd that the January 29, 2026, meeting of the Standing Committee on Legislative Offices be adjourned. All those in favour? Online? Any opposed? That motion is carried.

[The committee adjourned at 10:53 p.m.]





