



Legislative Assembly of Alberta

The 31st Legislature
Second Session

Standing Committee
on
Legislative Offices

Monday, May 11, 2026
10 a.m.

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Standing Committee on Legislative Offices

Lunty, Brandon G., Leduc-Beaumont (UC), Chair
Wright, Justin, Cypress-Medicine Hat (UC), Deputy Chair

Chapman, Amanda, Calgary-Beddington (NDP)
Cyr, Scott J., Bonnyville-Cold Lake-St. Paul (UC)
Dyck, Nolan B., Grande Prairie (UC)
Miyashiro, Rob, Lethbridge-West (NDP)
Petrovic, Chelsae, Livingstone-Macleod (UC)
Sawyer, Tara, Olds-Didsbury-Three Hills (UC)
Shepherd, David, Edmonton-City Centre (NDP)
Wright, Peggy K., Edmonton-Beverly-Clareview (NDP)
Yao, Tany, Fort McMurray-Wood Buffalo (UC)*

*substitution for Scott Cyr

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
Phillip D. Peters, KC	Auditor General

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
Lyndsay Tischer	Director of Human Resources
Amanda LeBlanc	Managing Editor of <i>Alberta Hansard</i>

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Monday, May 11, 2026

[Mr. Lundy in the chair]

The Chair: All right. Good morning, everyone. I'd like to call this meeting to order. 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, then we will hear from those joining us remotely. I'll begin to my right.

Mr. Wright: Morning, everyone. Justin Wright, MLA for the charming constituency of Cypress-Medicine Hat.

Mr. Yao: Tany Yao, Fort McMurray-Wood Buffalo.

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

Mrs. Petrovic: Chelsae Petrovic, Livingstone-Macleod.

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

Member Miyashiro: Rob Miyashiro, MLA, Lethbridge-West.

Ms Chapman: Amanda Chapman, Calgary-Beddington.

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

Mr. Koenig: Trafton Koenig, Law Clerk.

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

Ms Tischer: Good morning. Lyndsay Tischer, director of human resource services.

Ms Dean: Good morning. Shannon Dean, Clerk of the Assembly.

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

The Chair: All right. Thank you, everyone. We do have a member joining us online.

Please go ahead and introduce yourself.

Ms Wright: Thank you. Peggy Wright, Edmonton-Beverly-Clareview.

The Chair: All right. Thank you, everyone. For the record I would note the following substitution: Mr. Yao is substituting for Mr. Cyr.

A few housekeeping items to address before we turn to the business at hand. Please note that the microphones are operated by *Hansard*. Committee proceedings are being live streamed on the Internet and broadcast on Alberta Assembly TV. Those members participating remotely should ensure they are prepared to speak or vote when called upon. Videoconference participants are encouraged to have their cameras on, if possible, when speaking. As always, please set your cellphones and other devices to silent for the duration of the meeting.

Before we look at our agenda, I would like to preface any discussion on the agenda with a few comments. We are all aware that there is an ongoing investigation being conducted by Elections Alberta, EPS, and the RCMP. I would caution all members that we should not interfere in that investigation. I believe we all want justice to be done in this situation, and for that to happen, it is critical that Elections Alberta, EPS, and the RCMP are able to do their important work without interference. The purpose of this

meeting, which was called on April 16, is to discuss correspondence received from the Chief Electoral Officer related to the expansion of his mandate and his compensation. As I understand it from his letter, this is about resourcing or funding his work. Once again, this is not the venue to ask questions related to his investigation.

With those comments, I will move us on to our agenda. A draft meeting agenda was circulated. Does anyone wish to propose an amendment?

MLA Shepherd, I see your hand is up. Please go ahead.

Mr. Shepherd: Thank you, Mr. Chair. As we are on the top of the agenda and just in reference to the statement you just read, just a point of clarification, just to note. In question period on Monday, May 4, the Premier stated:

Mr. Speaker, there is a meeting of the Legislative Offices on May 11, which is a week from today. I understand the Chief Electoral Officer will be going to talk about [the] requirements of his office . . . I would encourage the members opposite who are present . . . to direct their questions to him at that time.

Just to be clear, that was in response to questions from the Leader of the Official Opposition about the data breach.

Then, in question period on Tuesday, May 5, the Premier again stated, again in response to questioning about the data breach, in reference to Elections Alberta:

They're going to have a meeting on May 11 to ensure they are properly resourced to fund all of their operations . . . I suspect members of that independent committee will also ensure . . . they have the funding they need.

Now, Mr. Chair, of course I e-mailed you about this on the 6th of May. Did not receive a response from you. Just noting that at that time the agenda did not indicate the CEO would be attending and certainly did not indicate what the Premier had been speaking of, and I was just asking for clarification. As I said, I did not receive a response, but I will note that shortly after that, we were informed the CEO would be attending.

So, I just wanted to clarify. Based on your statement, were the Premier's remarks in fact correct? That is, is there going to be an opportunity today to ask Mr. McClure a broader range of questions regarding the resources needed by Elections Alberta? If not, did you, as chair, reach out to the Premier to let her know that she was mistaken? Because as you know, it's considered a fairly significant offence to mislead the House. I'd hate for any members of the House or the broader public to be left with any impression that the Premier might have done so in connection with an issue as serious as the breach of data for 3 million Albertans. So, I just wanted to clarify on that point, Mr. Chair.

The Chair: Well, thank you for your comments, MLA Shepherd. We're not here today to sort of relitigate what might have been in *Hansard* for previous question periods, which people, of course, have access to. I will reiterate that the purpose of this meeting is to ensure that committee members on both sides are not being seen to or directly inserting themselves into an active investigation. I think that's a really important point.

With that, I would like to move us on and would ask if there is a motion to approve the agenda. I see MLA Wright with his hand up. Please go ahead.

Mr. Wright: Mr. Chair, I move forward with the agenda as previously presented.

The Chair: All right. Thank you. Moved by MLA Wright that the Standing Committee on Legislative Offices approve the proposed agenda as distributed for its May 11, 2026, meeting. All those in

favour, please say aye. Any opposed? All right. Seeing none, that motion is carried.

I can move us on to our next item, which is approval of minutes from the previous meeting. We also have a set of minutes from our last meeting. Are there any errors or admissions? All right. Seeing none, is there any member who'd like to make a motion to approve the minutes? MLA Petrovic.

I'll read this out for the record. Moved by MLA Petrovic that the Standing Committee on Legislative Offices approve the minutes as distributed of its meeting held on March 25, 2026. All those in favour, please say aye. Are there any opposed? All right. Seeing none, that motion is carried.

We can proceed on our agenda, which is regarding the officers of the Legislature compensation. Thank you, everyone. The next item on our agenda deals with compensation for the officers of the Legislature. This is an issue that is addressed by this committee on a regular basis. Since this item relates to compensation, it would be more appropriately discussed in camera prior to any related motions being considered. However, prior to entertaining a motion to go in camera, I would like to invite Mr. McClure, Chief Electoral Officer, to join us at the table. I just wanted to note that while the Chief Electoral Officer may choose to speak more broadly on other issues, I would remind the committee that it is for the Chief Electoral Officer to make broader focused comments related to budget. Secondly, this committee is not mandated to enter into discussion on operational specifics occurring within the office of the Chief Electoral Officer, including, as I mentioned, any investigations or review of processes.

I see that Mr. McClure has joined us at the table. When you are ready, you have 10 minutes to address this committee. Please go ahead, sir.

Mr. McClure: Thank you, Mr. Chair, and thank you to the committee for hearing my request. I took on this role back in 2024, in November. At the time I took the position, I took it at 25 per cent of the scheduled total amount as I had a lot to learn. I have learned a lot in the last year and a bit. In the time that I've been Chief Electoral Officer, I have entertained and received 28 recall initiatives, seven citizen initiatives of which three have been engaged. I took the chief electoral office to a constant state of readiness, which has allowed us to address the referenda without yet having to come back before this House. We're still preparing. At the same time we're preparing for a general election in 2027. Both these events normally would take 12 to 18 months. In going to a continuous state of readiness, we are quickly adapting and able to respond to the needs of the people of Alberta and the government.

10:10

My mandate has changed in that we now will be dealing with disinformation. In anticipation of that, in the last year I worked to establish an information integrity unit, building relationships across Canada and with policing and intelligence agencies. I have looked and examined the legislation as it has been changed four times in the previous year and have come back with my concerns that I brought before this House. I will not get into the details, but my concerns are, for lack of better words, that I feel like Cassandra at times because they have borne out in terms of our enforceability. I treat my responsibilities to the Legislative Assembly and its members very, very seriously in any recommendations I make.

The volume of work is unprecedented. In Alberta's history we have not had a referendum of a minimum of nine questions, possibly up to 11, which we'll find as we validate the initiatives at the same time as preparing for an election while standing up an integrity unit and carrying out multiple investigations.

In examining my work, the work I've undertaken and the success I've had in addressing it, I made a request to this Legislative Assembly for an additional 3 per cent increase above what is normally expected. I am not asking for the full amount of what the salary would be, but to recognize that I have gone above and beyond in trying to meet the needs of the citizens of Alberta and yourselves.

I have built a team that, I must say, is par none. I can say that we are leading in Canada with the small but mighty team that we have of 48 people. At the same time I have looked at resourcing those folks that work with me in securing a warehouse in this period of time but also carrying out work with infrastructure to look at a proper right size of a building, as we're bursting at the seams. Currently I have boardrooms filled with people doing call centre work, working for the EBC in my warehouse. I'm stretched beyond compare and making the most of every resource you have given me and making sure that I move my staff on to the objectives set for us. That is why I've asked for an additional 3 per cent. I don't treat this very lightly. I look at these as the resources of Albertans, and I believe I have to show value for money.

I will leave it at that. I thank you for your time. I am very open to any questions you may have.

The Chair: All right. Well, thank you, sir, for your presentation.

I will now open the floor for any questions to Mr. McClure. MLA Shepherd caught my eye, so please go ahead, sir.

Mr. Shepherd: Thank you, Mr. Chair and through you to Mr. McClure, thank you for meeting with us today and thank you for the work you're doing. I've heard you clearly. You know, you are facing an unprecedented level of work. Certainly, we've been observing from the Legislature the number of changes in legislation, the challenges you've faced, and certainly appreciated your communications about Bill 54 before it was passed last year.

Just to ask a few questions, then, about what you put forward here today. One of the things you mentioned is that one of the parts of your work that you feel sort of is, I guess for lack of a better term, a justification for requesting additional salary has been the work you have put in standing up a new information and integrity unit. I apologize if I missed it. I don't recall much discussion at the committee before about that portion of your work. Could you just give us a bit of clarity about: what is this new information and integrity unit? Could you outline, I guess, what the work has been for yourself and your staff in standing that up, and can you give us a sense about sort of why you have felt that was a necessary, important part of your work?

Mr. McClure: Certainly. When I applied for this job and presented to the Legislative Assembly, one of the things I highlighted was my concern of foreign actors and people and those who view the democratic process that we execute here as something to be manipulated or brought down in its nature. In working with my team I have, first off, developed a very robust project plan identifying key positions as well as started reaching out across Canada to find out if there's anything of this nature anywhere else in any electoral management body. There is not. Quite the opposite. In reaching out to my counterparts in other electoral management bodies, they're very keen to join Alberta. I started with this government – I believed that Alberta was leading the way. That's why I came to Alberta to work here, and it's my goal to lead Alberta in this regard. It's to address issues of misinformation, malinformation, which is malicious spreading, but also the handling of information.

This unit: individuals working within it have already started doing work, though prematurely. We're expecting it to stand up in

June. With the leak that has gone on – and I will not get into great details – they have been chasing down what happened for us. So it's to look at the management of information. Some of that is within our mandate, and others are an expanded interim mandate when the government decided to address deepfakes, so we've started acquiring proper software, proper individuals able to manage within this area, and we're now establishing relationships with other policing agencies and intelligence-gathering groups to better share information on misinformation, disinformation, malinformation. In some cases when information goes awry: where did it go? Who received it?

The Chair: Thank you.

Mr. Shepherd: Follow-up, Mr. Chair?

The Chair: Yeah. Sure. Perfect time to interject. I will allow a follow-up or maybe two follow-ups per speaker as long as it's on the related topic and not a new question. We're going to do our best to go back and forth between each side.

Your follow-up, MLA Shepherd.

Mr. Shepherd: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Indeed, I appreciate that clarification, Mr. McClure, and a better understanding of what it is you're putting together.

Can you give us a sense, then, again, since the topic of discussion here today is your request for a salary increase, of the level of additional work, I guess, the standing up of this unit has created for yourself and your staff?

Mr. McClure: The nature of the work is to build relationships with other bodies. When I leave here today, I'll be going back into another meeting with an intelligence agency to try and build this relationship. We're at the moment discussing things such as how to get top secret clearances so that we can actually have an open and viable dialogue.

Looking at the scope and scale of what we have to work with, it's not just with the legislation that falls within what the government has vested me with but other things such as if someone is engaging in libellous activities. We have a very broad tool kit, so it's expanding and looking at it through the tool kit we have to work with. If we are able to work with other agencies, we can then expand into that. It's looking at proposals and best practice across the Commonwealth; also, within the EU. I would like to say there's best practice in the States. It's a very different environment to the south of us because their Constitution is very different, so we've stuck to Commonwealth nations and the European Union at this time.

It's also looking at resources, proper tools, and the right skill sets with the individuals in the seats but at the same time being very cognizant that there are always financial constraints to be brought to bear. I'm very, very well aware in my previous roles I've held within government that nothing comes without a cost, but you have to be very careful with the dollars we use because they're taxpayer dollars.

Mr. Shepherd: Thank you, Mr. McClure.

The Chair: Thank you.

MLA Wright, I saw your hand. Please go ahead.

Mr. Wright: Well, thank you, Mr. Chair. Through you, sir, I'd like to build off the workload questioning that Member Shepherd was just asking about. If I take a look at your March 27, 2026, letter to this committee, you stated that your role as CEO has "expanded well beyond historical expectations of ensuring preparations for the

October 2027 Provincial General Election and day-to-day operations of my office."

Sir, I just have a question. Do you have any concerns about the resources you have to successfully execute your duties, including but not limited to elections, referendums, et cetera?

Mr. McClure: I do have concerns. I am looking to bring that back to the Legislative Assembly at a later date, but the answer is yes.

10:20

Presently I'm focused on making sure that we will have the resources in place for the referendum. I am envisioning that we will need between 60,000 and 90,000 people to hand count. That in its own right is a significant undertaking. We've already stood up the returning officers and are starting to establish voter places and are engaging in training at this time. We are utilizing our budget that we received for preparation of the election, so I will be back because I'm using election preparation monies that were provided very graciously by the Legislative Assembly in reviewing my budget. I'm using those for the referendum that was called.

Mr. Wright: Well, thank you, sir, for that answer. Appreciate that you're going to bring that back to the committee.

Mr. Chair, if I may have a follow-up?

The Chair: Sure. Go ahead.

Mr. Wright: Still continuing on the workforce side of things and workload, in your letter you referenced the administration of 28 recall petitions, which you present as evidence of increased workload. Based upon Elections Alberta's official statements it's my understanding that none of the 28 recall petitions have proceeded past the initial count of the signatures. Can you confirm that most of these petitions concluded early in the verification process and what level of resources are required for those early stages to compare to a full petition should it be verified?

Mr. McClure: That's a very good question. When we go and deal with a recall or even a citizen initiative, as soon as we receive it, we have to begin as if it was going to be successful, which means hiring, standing up individuals. In the case of recall petitions we went and interviewed roughly 400-plus people. We stood up a team, and the teams have to be stood up because as soon as it arrives, legislatively, we have mandated time frames we have to operate within. It's kind of like being in the military. You have to be prepared to go. You don't have an option. You go with what you have, so we prepare and stand up the teams, get them ready. The count itself is the last step before it comes back before either the Legislature or goes to the Governor General, depending on if it was a citizen initiative, say, for a constitutional matter.

The Chair: I have MLA Miyashiro next. I will give a very, very brief, small, quick second follow-up to MLA Wright.

Mr. Wright: Very quick off that, sir, have all employees returned to the office?

Mr. McClure: Our employees are in the office. We have a flexible work arrangement. We have had that for a number of years because, actually, space is at a premium. If your question is: do some people work from home on an – sorry; I'm getting tongue-tied. I do apologize. I have employees that – all employees do come into the office. They do have a work-from-home schedule. I've been utilizing them. I also have employees that are working here. They've spent the weekends working with me as well, so they've been putting in hours beyond their normal.

The Chair: Thank you very much.
MLA Miyashiro, please go ahead.

Member Miyashiro: Thank you, Chair, and through you to Mr. McClure. You were talking about the added things to your job since you took over in 2024. You also missed one other by-election that you had to oversee that year. My question is related to – this might be a twoparter. The first one is: when you took this position, were these components of petitions and referenda part of the description that you were given for this position?

Mr. McClure: They're within the legislation. But had they ever taken place? The answer is no. The normal cycle, when I checked with folks and applied to this position, was that you have one or two by-elections in each four-year cycle. You will be preparing for an election, and that takes 12 to 18 months, usually about 18 months.

Member Miyashiro: Sorry. Just to continue with that . . .

The Chair: Yeah. Go ahead.

Member Miyashiro: . . . I guess what I'm getting at is that when you're an executive in an organization, people often think it's okay to do some scope creep and just add little things to your position and add something else. I've seen this in the reorganization of health and in children's services in the long time that I've been around. Do you feel like right now this is a case of not just death by a thousand cuts; these are like lashes? These are things they're adding to your workload in a substantial way so much so that you feel compelled now to come and ask for a higher level compensation.

Mr. McClure: The workload is outside the norm that the other Chief Electoral Officers have experienced in the past, so the comparison of my workload to theirs is very dramatically different. At the same time the compensation that they received was much higher, and that's neither here nor there. I'm not going to argue for the full amount. That's not why I'm here; quite the opposite. I wanted to take a moment just for the recognition and seek an additional 3 per cent.

Now, is it all within the legislation? Everything that I'm dealing with is within the legislation – I fully acknowledge that – but it doesn't usually all arrive at once. Right now my big focus is making sure I manage the workload, work with the staff so that they can prepare for a referendum, they can deal with the citizen initiatives that are under way, they can wrap up recall, and at the same time prepare for an election next year. Now, it could be called earlier, and then I will have to push them even harder. A large portion of my job is working very closely with the staff to make sure that they are resourced, they're heard, and it's a very fine balance of pushing people for a result as opposed to pushing people till they burn out.

The Chair: All right. Thank you very much.
I have MLA Dyck next on the list. Please go ahead, sir.

Mr. Dyck: I appreciate that, Chair. Thanks for coming in. Greatly appreciate it. I got just a couple of questions here. You've mentioned just some of the different things historically that have happened, so I guess my question is that the Chief Electoral Officer has always been responsible for various pieces of legislation, and I believe that all of these pieces of legislation and the outcome of what the potential of that was also in the job description originally sent out. I believe that, predominantly, that job description has been a similar one throughout the ages as well. Can you just expand for me

specifically how your current responsibilities differ from other prior Chief Electoral Officers throughout the last few terms? I think that that's a really important question here right now.

Mr. McClure: I'm not disputing that most of what I'm dealing with is within the legislation. The parts of the legislation that have changed in my regard are things such as that dealing with deepfakes has been added. Time frames have changed, but that's still within the legislative body that I address.

What has happened historically is that these events don't take place all at once – this is a very fine point – though they existed. The legislation, for example, existed for a citizen initiative. From the time it was brought in in 2022 till present, there was no citizen initiative. It was a line item in the budget, but really it was not really funded. Recall: though it existed in legislation, recall was not taken up by the people of Alberta.

It all came together in a very fine storm, which makes it a very different year while we're preparing for referendums. The last referendums happened concurrently with a vote or they happened under the LAEA in municipal elections. It did not happen – this is the first stand-alone with multiple questions.

There are unique aspects to each of these that make them different. For lack of better words, I used to drink from a garden hose; now I'm drinking from a firehose. It's very different. Now, am I willing to rally up? You bet. You hired me to do that, to step up, step forward. I'm not disputing that at all.

10:30

The Chair: A quick follow-up, MLA Dyck?

Mr. Dyck: Yeah. Thank you, Chair. I appreciate that quite a bit.

I just want to go back to a quick question. You've mentioned a few different things here as well, and I would like to expand upon your comments on costing and the role expansion. I want to confirm with you. You've in the past come back for supplemental supply, and I believe this committee has given you significant supplemental supply. Now, you've also referenced that. Can you just explain a little bit more? Like, you've also mentioned that you're coming back for that. Is there a timeline, potentially? I'm not trying to do your job. I don't want to do your job. It's never a job that I think I want, but you've also mentioned it. I want to bring some clarity to that as well here today.

Mr. McClure: In terms of the referendum when we were before the Legislative Assembly we sought monies to prepare for the provincial general election because it takes 12 to 18 months; 18 months is very conservative because of the amount of paper and the number of things to be secured. When the referendum was called, it caused a significant shift, so we're using all our resources that we presently have in order to deliver on the referendum that was called.

Now, that means that I'm putting off until such time I can start to engage in preparation for a general election to be held in October 2027. I still have to do that within this fiscal year. As soon as the referendum is counted and the results are released – well, even before that, I'm already going to be starting people, as their aspects are done, working on the election. Resource-wise, it's drawn down my resources.

The money that I would have, for example, for paper for ballots for the general election I have turned and moved to buy ballot paper for, approximately, on the prospect on the outside edge, 11 questions for 33 million ballots. It's a significant cost when it comes to that. We've already started packing for the referendum and working through that. I should be packing right now for a general election. That means making sure there are laptops, computer programming done for what's called VoterView, which is a way of

tracking. Also, the pay system set up for an election is different than when I hire for the volume of people I'm going to hire for to hand count for a referendum because of the sheer number and the time frame which it has to happen within.

We are looking right now at fully expending what we have before we come back. One of the takeaways I took from the Member of the Legislative Assembly is that when I have had to come here and estimate, estimates are not as precise as if I come here with better numbers. The closer I get to the referendum, I will be able to come back before the Legislative Assembly and speak to the numbers of what it costs to hold a referendum. I will be seeking additional monies then to carry on and prepare for the provincial general election.

Mr. Dyck: Thank you.

The Chair: All right. Thank you.

I will interject quickly and say that we are a little bit up against the clock. We do have to go in camera at some point here. I would never direct members to make their questions brief, but if they could, that'd be great. I would also never direct Mr. McClure to keep his answers brief, but I just want to raise the awareness that if we do it a little more rapid fire, we can maybe get a few more in.

With that, I will go to MLA Shepherd.

Mr. Shepherd: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Through you to Mr. McClure. Just to return, I guess, to the reason for the meeting today, you're requesting specifically an additional 3 per cent increase due to the increase in the nature of your work. Your argument, as I've heard it: you began at that 25 per cent reduction as you recognized you had a lot to learn. You have indeed, as you said, had the chance to drink from the firehose in the last year and have a lot of learning and work with your team on that. I certainly recognize, as I think members of the committee at previous meetings have noted, that more work deserves more pay. I can certainly understand the argument there.

Just trying to understand, again, a little bit more. You're asking for this increase for yourself because your workload has increased. I can understand you are managing all aspects of Elections Alberta as Elections Alberta is taking on a lot of new things. That continues to be the case, so we do know that there's going to be a lot more work coming down the pipe here, as you noted, provincial election, the referendum. With that referendum, of course, we have a significant investigation that your office is undertaking, not getting into the specifics of it but simply noting it will have real implications for that referendum. You've already noted it has implications for the amount of work you need to put into counting signatures and verifying signatures on one of the current citizen initiative petitions that's been brought to you.

Of course, we also have a new government committee of MLAs which is working to redraw electoral boundaries, so you will not have that information until October, which is quite outside the norm.

Mr. Wright: Point of order.

The Chair: We have a point of order that has been called.

MLA Wright, please go ahead.

Mr. Wright: Yeah. Mr. Shepherd just stated that it will be MLAs that are redrawing committees. As the motion before the Legislature says, it will be a special committee of nonmembers of the Legislature that would be making any changes. The information that was brought forward by Mr. Shepherd is, in fact, false and is out of order.

The Chair: Do you have a standing order you'd like to reference, MLA Wright?

Mr. Wright: Two seconds here. Sorry. I would go under 23(i).

The Chair: Okay, 23(i).

Mr. Shepherd: Sorry. What was 23(i), Mr. Wright?

Mr. Wright: "Imputes false or unavowed motives to another Member." Other members will not be forming the lines, and as such that is out of order.

Mr. Shepherd: Thank you, Mr. Chair. This is not a point of order. It's a matter of debate. The comment has nothing to do with motives. I did not speculate at all why members of that committee would be participating in the redrawing of the electoral boundaries. Whether or not that is what they are doing is a matter of debate. Mr. Wright has his opinion on the matter. I think myself and a lot of other Albertans have our opinion on that matter.

Let's be absolutely clear. While there is an expert panel that's being engaged to provide advice, all of the decisions, all of the votes will be made by MLAs, at which point that will be brought to the Legislature and it will be debated. It will be voted on by MLAs, and MLAs would of course have the ability at any point to make changes to the recommendations that were brought forward, as, in my personal opinion, we have seen this government already do in instituting what we maintain is an unconstitutional and inappropriate process. This is not a point of order, Mr. Chair. It is a matter of debate. [interjection] Mr. Wright, if you want to make remarks, please make them on the record.

The Chair: Gentlemen, I'm happy to weigh in here. Thank you, both.

I will admit to being a little confused why we're talking about electoral boundaries during the Legislative Offices Committee. Thank you, MLA Shepherd, for introducing that into the conversation. In this specific false motives point of order, I don't think that's the point of order. I would ask the member to please talk about the business at hand. We have very limited time, as I just mentioned, for Mr. McClure and the Legislative Offices Committee. Again, I think we will be going in camera shortly, so if you have a question related to Mr. McClure and his mandate, please go ahead, Mr. Shepherd.

Mr. Shepherd: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I was about to reach my question before I was interrupted by Mr. Wright. The question, then, to the Chief Electoral Officer is: given all of these exigent circumstances, does he feel that this 3 per cent is, in fact, adequate for the level of additional work that we know is going to be coming and that he will be managing in his office? Then considering that, of course, yeah, likely, is that the best use of the resources, I guess, given that we recognize there's going to have to be quite a bit more given to Elections Alberta itself to complete all this additional work as well?

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Mr. McClure: I'm the last person that wants to toot my own horn. I'll be really frank. I took this job because I thought I could be a faceless bureaucrat to a certain degree. However, is 3 per cent sufficient? I think it is. I know what I agreed to. I'm not one to go back on my agreement. I sought recognition as to the increased workload in what I was asking. I also look at fiscal constraint. I'm very much focused on that. What the Legislative Assembly decides I leave to their discretion.

Thank you for your question.

10:40

The Chair: All right. Thank you.

Again, in the interest of time, MLA Petrovic, you've been patient. Please go ahead.

Mrs. Petrovic: Thank you, Chair. I will keep it short and just jump right into it.

Towards the end of your letter you referenced sustained effort, strategic oversight, and operational leadership as key demands of your role. Can you describe what your expectations were in terms of the job description and the key responsibilities when you took on the Chief Electoral Officer, when you accepted the position back in November of 2024?

Mr. McClure: Those points that you highlighted are definitely part of what I saw in this role. There's no question on that. It is a question of the volume that has been brought to bear at this time, not a question of providing strategic oversight, operational management, and leadership. That is integral to this role. It's just what I am observing is a heightened sense and heightened responsibility based on sheer volumes.

Mrs. Petrovic: So I'm understanding that you believe that short-term or situational workload increases justify permanent changes in compensation?

Mr. McClure: If I thought it was short term, it might be different, but it's been sustained and it appears that it will continue to be sustained for beyond the last year. It'll extend beyond this year.

Mrs. Petrovic: Just one more, Chair, if you don't mind. I know Elections Alberta relies heavily on third-party contractors to carry out some of its mandate, which increases operational costs and necessitates the need for supplemental requests in the past. Even in this meeting today you've confirmed that you're going to be bringing forward an additional request. For myself it's a bit of a task to understand how subcontracting these additional workloads adds to your job description, therefore supplementing that additional 3 per cent raise. If you can comment on that really quick.

Thank you.

Mr. McClure: I need clarification on which supplemental contracting you're speaking of. Is that my legal advice?

Mrs. Petrovic: No, I'm not talking about legal advice. We're looking at printing, mailing services, ballots, mailing cards, manual signage – that's subcontracted out to third-party contractors, from my understanding – IT systems and software, voter registration systems, cybersecurity, data management tools, facility logistics, communication and advertising, and then potentially some temporary staffing as well. Just curious if you can comment on that.

Mr. McClure: Yeah. Okay. I'm more than happy to. First off, in terms of, like, ballot printing, well, my facility does not have the ability to print. We design. We hold rigorous standards that we have available for things such as ballots. The printing goes outside. Signages and branding is done within Elections Alberta, and again, we go outside to print it because the cost of building that infrastructure and maintaining it would be higher than what it would yield for the people of Alberta.

In terms of IT solutions we build our requirements listing internally. We have staff we work with. We design it as to the legislation. We will then go outside and seek IT systems that meet

our requirements and we'll adapt them, but we also have staff who can manipulate and work with the IT systems and build on them.

Our movement towards new IT systems are that they should be able to be controlled and manipulated, and I say "manipulated" in a sense of when a piece of legislation changes, rather than seek an outside contractor, we'll move to have our staff inside able to program and adapt. Rather than having delays for the building of an IT program to meet a legislative requirement such as I'll use the example of, say, a third-party advertiser reporting, we will be able to do that in-house. That's what we're moving toward.

We maintain control over all aspects. We seek to use our contracting relationships to minimize costs, and we also take full responsibility for the systems we use. We do not defer any of our decision-making to anyone else. We oversee the strategic side.

The Chair: All right. Thank you.

We have time for one more question very quick. Would anyone like to – I'll offer it to the opposition first. Seeing none. Very quick, MLA Sawyer, please.

Mrs. Sawyer: Thanks. Given that you mentioned the three by-elections in June and one happened to be mine, I had a quick question about that. Obviously, it was my first by-election. Sounds like they were your first by-elections, I think I heard? Could you tell me: how are they fundamentally different in nature, if they were, from any other by-elections that were traditionally administered by your office?

Mr. McClure: Traditionally there are not usually three, for example, but also it comes down to concurrent activities that are undertaken. If I was looking solely at executing a by-election or three by-elections in this case, each one will run as discrete. We stand up the infrastructure almost as if it were an election, but it runs for that constituency, that electoral district.

In my case it's also all the other things that are going on concurrently. We're not necessarily the norm in the past. A by-election is normal; it's not normal, though, to be faced with citizens' initiatives, recalls, dealing with IT infrastructure, issues of misinformation or disinformation coming from different . . .

Mrs. Sawyer: Sorry, no. I do appreciate that, Mr. Chair. I was just trying to understand in terms of, like, as you mentioned with the by-election, the process for those that didn't change. Yes, there were three, but what you had to do for them: there wasn't anything different, was there?

Mr. McClure: No.

Mrs. Sawyer: Thanks.

The Chair: Well, thank you for that. Again, thank you, Mr. McClure, for joining us and answering our questions.

At this point we are discussing salary-related information of the officers of the Legislature. It would be appropriate for the committee to consider moving in camera at this point. Would anyone like to make a motion in that regard?

MLA Wright, please go ahead.

Mr. Wright: I move that the Standing Committee of the Legislative Offices meet in camera to discuss salary-related information concerning the officers of the Legislature and that required staff from the Legislative Assembly Office remain in attendance.

The Chair: All right. Thank you for that motion. Is there any discussion? Seeing none, I will call the question. All those in favour

of the motion, please say aye. Any opposed? That motion is carried. We'll pause briefly to allow staff and others to leave the room.

[The committee met in camera from 10:47 a.m. to 11:27 a.m.]

The Chair: All right. Having moved back on the record, does anyone have any comments regarding officer compensation? MLA Shepherd, please go ahead.

Mr. Shepherd: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I would like to move a motion, the motion being that we move forward as per the request that came forward from Mr. McClure, the CEO, in which he requested an additional increase to his salary for a total increase of 6 per cent.

I believe the clerk may have something prepared that I'd be happy to read into the record.

The Chair: Yeah. Absolutely. I just want to make clear that this is under agenda item 4(b), and that is in relation to the request from the Chief Electoral Officer. We can certainly entertain that motion, but just for the record this is under 4(b) in our agenda, and we may or may not have a motion or discussion on 4(a). Actually, I'll ask the table if we should address 4(a) before entertaining motions on 4(b).

Please go ahead and read your motion, MLA Shepherd.

Mr. Shepherd: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Moved by myself, then, that the Standing Committee on Legislative Offices approve a salary modifier for the Chief Electoral Officer of 6 per cent effective April 1, 2026.

To motivate, I think Mr. McClure was quite clear in his letter and in his presentation to us here today that there has been an unprecedented increase in the workload and the expectations for himself as Chief Electoral Officer. We have seen this government change legislation four times in the past year, having direct impact on all of the work that is before Mr. McClure, and some of those changes directly led to the unprecedented situation we find ourselves in. The government's decision to change the parameters on citizens' initiatives petitions and on voter recalls meant that we have seen since then a rash of voter recall petitions. We have certainly seen a number of citizens' initiative petitions.

It's also this government's decision to go ahead with a profound referendum this fall of up to it looks like 11 questions potentially, and of course, it's this government's decision to reject the majority report of the Electoral Boundaries Commission, which has sparked the new process they have set up by which MLAs will be overseeing a group of expert advisers and voting on their efforts to redraw boundaries yet again, which means that the CEO and his staff will be facing an unprecedented time crunch to be able to respond with preparations for the next election, and that's if the government should choose to keep the election to the legislative date of October of next year.

I think it is reasonable based on all of these things that he would ask for an increase, especially given that he started out at a significant deficit. He came in at a much lower salary range than many officers first taking office and has spent, as he shared with us, the past year working very hard with his team to get up to speed, to learn all of these pieces, and indeed to be able to step up to the significant changes and additions.

I will also note, you know, perhaps anticipating arguments which may come forward from any that might choose to vote against, that certainly the government has not been shy about increasing compensation for folks that they feel on their side are taking on more work. Indeed, if I may quote Mr. Yao from a previous meeting of this committee.

If the member from across the way understands labour – they pride themselves on respecting unions and stuff like that – if they understand that mentality, they'll understand that folks that do more work get compensated appropriately for that.

That was in reference to the increase that the government has put through for parliamentary secretaries, a 5 per cent increase which Mr. Yao and Mrs. Petrovic here at the committee are receiving. So I would simply note, Mr. Chair, that we are following in due course by putting forward this motion. As Mr. Yao said, if you do more work, you should be able to take on more pay.

As one of my colleagues referenced in earlier remarks in discussions, I think direct democracy comes with a price. The government has made decisions about how it feels our democratic system should work, made them quickly and rashly at times, I would say, without much forethought. That comes with costs for Mr. McClure, for Elections Alberta, and indeed for our province. On our side of the table we're at least willing to ensure that Mr. McClure is fairly compensated in light of that.

Thank you.

The Chair: All right. Thank you.

Is there anyone else wishing to speak to this motion?

Seeing none, I am prepared to call this question. All those in favour of the motion as presented, please say aye. Oh, thank you, MLA Wright. I may have forgotten about you in earlier votes, but I heard your voice loud and clear there. All those opposed to this motion, please say aye.

That motion has been defeated.

Mr. Shepherd: Recorded vote, Mr. Chair.

The Chair: A recorded vote has been requested. Those in the room who are in favour of the motion, please raise your hands.

Ms Rempel: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I see Mr. Shepherd, Ms Chapman, and Member Miyashiro.

The Chair: And online?

Ms Rempel: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I see Ms Wright.

The Chair: All those who are opposed to the motion, please raise your hands.

Ms Rempel: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I see Mr. Wright, Mr. Yao, Mr. Dyck, Mrs. Petrovic, and Mrs. Sawyer.

I have four votes in favour and five against.

The Chair: Thank you.

That motion is defeated.

Are there any other motions under agenda items 4(a) or 4(b)? MLA Dyck, I saw your hand earlier. Please go ahead.

Mr. Dyck: Sure. Thank you very much, Chair. I'd love to move a motion here. Maybe if we can just get that on the screen. Moved by myself that

the Standing Committee on Legislative Offices adopt a compensation strategy for the officers of the Legislature which (a) remains tied to the Alberta public service senior officials former salary range A set out in order in council 076-2025, and (b) is adjusted annually to reflect any general increase or other salary modifier provided to senior officials in the Alberta public service.

I believe, if I may just speak to this real quick here, Chair, that this recommendation preserves the longstanding idea that compensation for officials of the Legislature should remain aligned with the Alberta public service senior officials, and that produces consistency and also

continuity and understanding the expectation in the future as well. This also creates some transparency both for the public as well as those members. It is, I believe, a principled aspect, and it also makes this administratively efficient as well just to be able to do this and also prevents us from always having to come back here for ad hoc compensation questions or variances on that here in future years. I think this is a very good thing for us to be able to do, and I will encourage the committee to vote yes for this motion as well.

11:35

The Chair: All right. Thank you, MLA Dyck.

Is there anyone else? MLA Shepherd, please go ahead.

Mr. Shepherd: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I think we are largely in support of this motion. Now, certainly somewhat confused as to why government and cabinet made the decision to eliminate this salary range. It certainly seems to be a surprise to all members of the committee. We weren't aware of this decision that had been made on April 1. In the meantime we still have to make sure that we are properly compensating the officers of the Legislature despite the lack now of a framework that's been removed by government and cabinet. So it makes sense to me that we adopt this informally even if it no longer exists formally.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

The Chair: All right. Is there anyone else looking to enter this debate?

Seeing none, I am prepared to call this question. All those in favour of the motion as presented, please say aye. Any opposed?

That motion is carried.

I'll move us on in our agenda to other business. Are there any items for discussion under other business? Seeing none.

The next meeting date will be held at the call of the chair.

That moves us to adjournment. Would a member move a motion to adjourn? MLA Dyck, I saw your hand shoot up. Please go ahead.

Mr. Dyck: I move to adjourn this meeting.

The Chair: All right. Moved by MLA Dyck that the May 11, 2026, meeting of the Standing Committee on Legislative Offices be adjourned. All those in favour, please say aye. Any opposed? That motion is carried, and we are adjourned.

[The committee adjourned at 11:37 a.m.]

