

Legislative Assembly of Alberta

The 31st Legislature
Second Session

Standing Committee on Legislative Offices

Monday, November 23, 2026
10:15 a.m.

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Standing Committee on Legislative Offices

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Johnson, Jennifer, Lacombe-Ponoka (UC), Deputy Chair

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Miyashiro, Rob, Lethbridge-West (NDP)
Petrovic, Chelsae, Livingstone-Macleod (UC)
Shepherd, David, Edmonton-City Centre (NDP)
Sinclair, Scott, Lesser Slave Lake (UC)
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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

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10:15 a.m. Monday, November 23, 2026

[Mr. Lunty 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 Lunty, 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. We'll begin to my right.

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

Ms Armstrong-Homeniuk: Jackie Armstrong-Homeniuk, MLA, Fort Saskatchewan-Vegreville.

Mrs. Petrovic: Chelsae Petrovic, MLA, Livingstone-Macleod.

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

Mr. Sinclair: Scott Sinclair, MLA for Lesser Slave Lake.

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

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

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

Mr. Koenig: Good morning, Mr. Chair. Law Clerk Trafton Koenig.

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

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

The Chair: All right. Thank you, everyone. I don't see anyone joining us online this morning, so we can move on to a few housekeeping items.

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We can move on to the second item, which is the agenda. A draft agenda was distributed for this meeting. Would anyone like to propose additions or amendments? Seeing none, would a member move a motion to approve the agenda? So moved by MLA Armstrong-Homeniuk that the Standing Committee on Legislative Offices approve the proposed agenda as distributed for its November 23, 2026, meeting. All those in favour, please say aye. Any opposed? That motion is carried.

Agenda item 3 is approval of minutes from the previous meeting. We also have a set of minutes from our last meeting. Are there any errors or omissions? Seeing none, would a member like to move a motion to approve the minutes? All right. Moved by MLA Petrovic that the Standing Committee on Legislative Offices approve the minutes as distributed of its meeting held on November 5, 2026. All those in favour, please say aye. Any opposed? That motion is carried.

That turns us to our fourth item on our agenda today, which is offices of the Legislature. Hon. members, the next items on the agenda include discussions of officer contracts and business matters. To respect the privacy and confidentiality of those involved, I recommend that the committee along with the appropriate Legislative Assembly Office staff consider moving in camera for this discussion. Would anyone like to make that motion? All right. Moved by MLA Dyck that the Standing Committee on Legislative Offices meet in camera to discuss officer contracts and the Auditor for the office of the Auditor General and that required staff from the Legislative Assembly Office remain in attendance. All right. All those in favour of that motion, please say aye. Any opposed? That motion is carried.

[The committee met in camera from 10:18 a.m. to 10:32 a.m.]

The Chair: All right. So we're now back on the record, and just a quick reminder to everyone that Legislative Assembly Office staff will be operating the microphones again.

We can continue with our agenda on officer contracts. As committee members are aware, the term of the current Information and Privacy Commissioner expires in less than a year. I'd like to open the floor to any discussions on this issue.

I saw MLA Dyck's hand. Go ahead, sir.

Mr. Dyck: Thank you, Chair. I really appreciate it. I just want to thank Ms McLeod for her work so far as the Information and Privacy Commissioner. I think I speak on behalf of all the members, just thankful for her work and the work that she has put in over the last five years.

I do want to move a motion here that will allow a search committee to be enacted. I would move that

> the Standing Committee on Legislative Offices recommend to the Government House Leader that a motion be introduced in the Assembly to establish a select special committee to search for a candidate for the position of Information and Privacy Commissioner.

Establishing this motion at this time would allow us to put together a search committee for this in the Legislature and potentially be able to have the legislative body pass this motion if they deem that to be a great motion. We could get to this before Christmas break as well. The current IP commissioner contract, I believe, expires kind of end of summer, and this would allow some potential crossover for that replacement as well if the committee deems it. I'd love the support of the committee on this and looking forward to having the committee's support.

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

Any members wishing to speak to this motion? MLA Shepherd, please go ahead.

Mr. Shepherd: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I don't know that there are words to express how strongly I and I believe the other members of the opposition object to and stand against this motion from Mr. Dyck.

I can't say that I'm surprised. This is part of a pattern that we've seen from this government, where anyone that dares criticize them, that dares stand up against them, that dares offer any opposition to anything they want to do gets removed. This is a government that has taken multiple steps to fundamentally undermine our democratic process in Alberta, making unreasonable demands, changing legislation repeatedly, and now introducing a rigged electoral map to attempt to help them cheat in the next election. So of course they removed the Chief Electoral Officer.

We had an Auditor General that's conducted numerous studies into this government's waste of taxpayer money, the DynaLife scandal in which this government wasted tens of millions of taxpayer dollars to privatize our laboratory system only to have to bring it back into the public system when the entire plan that they crafted over three years failed within six weeks. That Auditor General went on to undertake a profound investigation into the

corrupt care scandal, which is also under investigation by the RCMP. When his contract came up for renewal and he asked for a short extension simply to be able to finish that work, this government denied it to him and undertook another search process to replace him.

I participated in one of those two search processes, Mr. Chair. It was in camera, so I cannot go into details, but what I observed is government members who had no interest in selecting the best candidate. Indeed, I would say that they overlooked several of the best candidates. As I have said on the record, I think they sought to choose someone they could claim was credible but who had nowhere near the experience, knowledge, and expertise of others who were in that search process because, again, this government fundamentally resists and fights anyone who would hold them to account on any of their actions or who provides accountability and transparency on behalf of Albertans. That is exactly what we have happening here with Ms McLeod as the Information and Privacy Commissioner.

Ms McLeod, of course, spoke out strongly about this government's intended action to force Albertans to put their personal health care number and citizenship status on provincial ID and drivers' licences. She was very clear about the risks and the dangers that posed for Albertans. The government went ahead and did it anyway. Ms McLeod, who, unlike government members and unlike this government and Premier, puts Albertans' interests first, issued very clear instructions to Albertans on how to protect themselves against this government's careless overreach.

That's not the only time that she stood up to this government, Mr. Chair. When they introduced Bill 33 to replace the privacy side of the freedom of information and privacy act, she issued both a public statement and a formal letter that called for changes. She raised alarms over the lack of guardrails, over what the government was putting in place. It was basically automatic decision-making and artificial intelligence, weak transparency for government data matching, carve-outs for their political staff, new rules that allowed a minor's personal information to be disclosed without consent if it was deemed in their best interest. Ms McLeod stands up for the interests of Albertans.

On Bill 34, this government's changes to the Access to Information Act, which, I will note, came about after she had to carry out an unprecedented investigation that took in every ministry of this government for repeated and systematic denial of freedom of information requests, after a deep investigation that was done by the *Globe and Mail*, which found that this government is the least transparent in all of Canada: after Ms McLeod conducted that investigation and reported on that, 27 government departments, she found, were breaking existing freedom of information laws repeatedly and systematically. One can only read from that: intentionally. The government accepted some but denied two of her core recommendations.

On the bill itself she raised real concerns that the bill would significantly degrade government transparency and take access rights a step back, not forward. She called out the broad exemptions that shielded communications between ministers and political staff that extended the timelines for people to get a response and the new powers that are given to public bodies to utterly disregard requests and, of course, for the cherry on top, reduce the powers of the Information and Privacy Commissioner's office. But I guess reducing her powers isn't just enough, Mr. Chair. They have to remove her entirely because they cannot stomach having anyone in a position of authority that isn't under their thumb.

She went on to raise deep concerns about Bill 11, Health Statutes Amendment Act, 2025 (No. 2). She issued a formal public warning, Mr. Chair, about the actions this government was taking regarding those amendments that were in that bill, in addition to the fact that she opposed the placement of the personal health numbers on drivers' licences without oversight at motor vehicle registries.

10:40

She criticized that legislation for lacking individual privacy protections around AI and automated systems in health care, lacking any form of antiretaliation protection for whistle-blowers because, of course, we know this government doesn't stomach whistle-blowers, Mr. Chair, as we see with how they fired the former CEO of AHS, for which they now find themselves in court. She noted that they left out key privacy rules in favour of cabinet regulation because, again, this is a government that craves nothing but power and will fire or turf out anybody who stands in the way of it for them.

I note that government members are studiously looking elsewhere, looking down at their laptops or their notes. Mr. Chair, if I was in their shoes, I would feel incredible shame for these types of decisions, the continued behaviour of this government, for which they continue to sit as silent enablers.

Again, we are seeing the destruction and the undermining of every democratic process that provides transparency and accountability for Albertans. They may choose to write that off as hyperbole. They may choose to smile or smirk. They may choose to just think: it's just the opposition going off on another rant and tirade. But the fact is, Mr. Chair, that it's not just us. Political experts, scientists, community leaders across this province are deeply, deeply concerned by the state of our democracy under this government and this Premier. The stakes have never been higher.

Perhaps this is a simple decision today, but it is another brick in the wall. It's another decision that confirms the pattern. This is a government that thinks it deserves to hold power, that no one else deserves to hold power and no one deserves to hold them accountable.

For those reasons, Mr. Chair, I'll be voting against this motion.

The Chair: Are there any other members looking to join? MLA Miyashiro, go ahead.

Member Miyashiro: Thank you, Chair. You know, aside from what my colleague just said, the offices for which this committee has oversight are meant to be independent. That's a really important distinction, that they should be able to do their job free of any government interference or free of any retribution, as my colleague just said.

There's something to be said for someone that's in a job for five years and there has really been no performance issues. There have not been any of those issues brought to this committee. This person has done the job that they've been hired to do, and whether it ruffled feathers or not is irrelevant. They did their job, and they're protecting the privacy of Albertans, as my colleague said.

To bring someone new on to this position who doesn't understand the nuances of the different legislation, who doesn't understand what the role is, who doesn't understand where they function within our legislative offices just puts people's information at risk again.

The learning curve is steep, and we have someone in Ms McLeod that's done her job and has done it well and does not deserve to be just put out to pasture because the government members on this committee are not satisfied that this person is critical of their government.

With that, Mr. Chair, I will not be supporting this motion as well.

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

Are there any other members looking to join? MLA Wright, go ahead.

Ms Wright: Really just to echo what my colleagues have said, Mr. Chair, it's with a profound sense of disappointment that I certainly recognize the motion that is before us but it's also a profound sense of sort of lacking the skills to deal with the moment that we are in, I think. Certainly, my colleagues to my right here have articulated our collective position extraordinarily well.

If I could just add, though, that when I was a teacher not that many years ago, there were many, many difficult conversations that I had with students. Sometimes I didn't like what my students were saying to me in terms of my own teaching practice, but my job, Mr. Chair, was to listen to what my students said because, after all, they were the ones who experienced me teaching in real time. It didn't mean that I had to like what it was that they might be saying in that moment, but I had to respect it.

What I find with what we are seeing today is a profound lack of respect, particularly for the officers which are appointed to do the work on behalf of all Albertans. Government's job in this case, Mr. Chair, as my colleagues ably have mentioned previously, is to respect what these officers are telling us. These are the folks that come to us with a certain amount of skill, a certain amount of knowledge, a certain amount of awareness that the rest of us may not possess. It is our job even if we are unhappy with what it is they are suggesting. We must listen, and we should take their recommendations seriously. The fact that we have government members across from me that are apparently unwilling to do that, I think, honestly says everything that needs to be said.

I will not be supportive of this motion.

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

Are there any other members looking to join? MLA Shepherd, go ahead.

Mr. Shepherd: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Just one last comment. I'd like to just take this moment on the record to say thank you to Ms McLeod for her service to Albertans. She has filled and executed her duties in this role with the utmost in principle and respect and acknowledgement of her duty to Albertans. As my colleagues noted, in the letter that she sent us, the level of detail and thought that she put into that: that is what we've seen from her every time she has come and presented to this committee, every time she has sent a report out to the public, every action that she has taken. She has demonstrated that she is deeply knowledgeable on this file, deeply passionate about a key issue that continues to become an even more significant one in our current society with the level of access to information, the new tools that are being developed, the different ways that people's information is being taken and disseminated in increasing levels of detail.

Ms McLeod has understood this, and every action that she has taken has been with an eye to standing up for and defending the rights of Albertans in their best interests. So I want to say thank you to Ms McLeod, and that I'm very sorry that her due diligence, her work, and her service to Albertans is rewarded by this government in this way. I want to thank her staff as well, who work with her and do that work. We know from the multiple times that they've appeared in this committee that they continue to do so with nowhere near the staff or the budget that they need to meet the level of requests and the level of need. We thank them for their service and their continuing due diligence under challenging circumstances.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

The Chair: All right. Thank you.

Are there any other members looking to join the debate?

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

That motion is carried.

Mr. Shepherd: A recorded vote, Mr. Chair.

The Chair: All right. 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 Mrs. Johnson. I see the hon. Ms Armstrong-Homeniuk. I see Mrs. Petrovic. I see Mr. Dyck and Mr. Sinclair.

The Chair: All right. Those in the room who are opposed to the motion, please raise your hands.

Ms Rempel: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I have Member Miyashiro. I have Mr. Shepherd and Ms Wright.

For the motion:		
Armstrong-Homeniuk	Johnson	Sinclair
Dyck	Petrovic	
Against the motion:		
Miyashiro	Shepherd	Wright, P.
Totals:	For – 5	Against – 3

The Chair: All right. Thank you.

That motion is carried.

All right. I can move us on in our agenda to other business. I will quickly note for the record that Elections Alberta has provided a written follow-up to a question raised at our previous meeting. Are there any other items for discussion under other business? Seeing none.

Our next meeting date is scheduled for December 4, 2026.

With that, I can take us to adjournment. Would a member like to move to adjourn? Moved by MLA Petrovic that the November 23, 2026, meeting of the Standing Committee on Legislative Offices be adjourned. All those in favour, please say aye. Any opposed? That motion is carried.

[The committee adjourned at 10:50 a.m.]

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