



Legislative Assembly of Alberta

The 29th Legislature
First Session

Standing Committee
on
Public Accounts

Tuesday, December 1, 2015
8:30 a.m.

Transcript No. 29-1-6

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Standing Committee on Public Accounts

Fildebrandt, Derek Gerhard, Strathmore-Brooks (W), Chair
Gray, Christina, Edmonton-Mill Woods (ND), Deputy Chair

Barnes, Drew, Cypress-Medicine Hat (W)
Cyr, Scott J., Bonnyville-Cold Lake (W)
Dach, Lorne, Edmonton-McClung (ND)
Gotfried, Richard, Calgary-Fish Creek (PC)
Hunter, Grant R., Cardston-Taber-Warner (W)
Loyola, Rod, Edmonton-Ellerslie (ND)
Malkinson, Brian, Calgary-Currie (ND)
Miller, Barb, Red Deer-South (ND)
Payne, Brandy, Calgary-Acadia (ND)
Renaud, Marie F., St. Albert (ND)
Turner, Dr. A. Robert, Edmonton-Whitemud (ND)
Westhead, Cameron, Banff-Cochrane (ND)
Vacant, Calgary-Greenway

Office of the Auditor General Participants

Merwan Saher	Auditor General
Mary Gibson	Business Leader, Systems Audit Practice

Support Staff

W.J. David McNeil	Clerk
Robert H. Reynolds, QC	Law Clerk/Director of Interparliamentary Relations
Shannon Dean	Senior Parliamentary Counsel/ Director of House Services
Philip Massolin	Manager of Research Services
Stephanie LeBlanc	Legal Research Officer
Sarah Amato	Research Officer
Nancy Robert	Research Officer
Giovana Bianchi	Committee Clerk
Corinne Dacyshyn	Committee Clerk
Jody Rempel	Committee Clerk
Karen Sawchuk	Committee Clerk
Rhonda Sorensen	Manager of Corporate Communications and Broadcast Services
Jeanette Dotimas	Communications Consultant
Tracey Sales	Communications Consultant
Janet Schwegel	Managing Editor of <i>Alberta Hansard</i>

8:30 a.m. Tuesday, December 1, 2015

[Mr. Fildebrandt in the chair]

The Chair: Good morning, folks. I'm Derek Fildebrandt, chair of the committee. I will call this meeting of the Public Accounts Committee to order and welcome everyone here.

Before we start introductions, I'll acknowledge the loss of a very dedicated member of this committee and public servant, Mr. Manmeet Bhullar. Mr. Bhullar will be sorely missed. But this committee must continue, and that's something that Mr. Bhullar would have wanted us to do.

I'll start by inviting members to introduce themselves, beginning to my right with our deputy chair.

Ms Gray: Christina Gray, Edmonton-Mill Woods.

Mr. Cyr: Scott Cyr, MLA, Bonnyville-Cold Lake.

Mr. Barnes: Drew Barnes, Cypress-Medicine Hat.

Mr. Hunter: Grant Hunter, Cardston-Taber-Warner.

Ms Gibson: Mary Gibson, office of the Auditor General.

Mr. Saher: Merwan Saher, Auditor General.

Mr. Dach: Lorne Dach, MLA, Edmonton-McClung.

Dr. Turner: Bob Turner, Edmonton-Whitemud.

Mr. Malkinson: Brian Malkinson, MLA, Calgary-Currie.

Mr. Westhead: Cameron Westhead, Banff-Cochrane.

Ms Miller: Barb Miller, MLA, Red Deer-South.

Ms Renaud: Marie Renaud, St. Albert.

Ms Payne: Good morning. Brandy Payne, Calgary-Acadia.

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

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

The Chair: And if they are on the phone, if Mr. Gotfried and Mr. Loyola could introduce themselves.

Mr. Gotfried: Richard Gotfried, Calgary-Fish Creek.

Mr. Loyola: Rod Loyola, Edmonton-Ellerslie.

The Chair: Thank you very much.

A few housekeeping items to address before we get to the business. Microphones are being operated by *Hansard* staff, so there's no need for members to touch them.

Audio of the proceedings is being streamed live on the Internet and recorded by *Hansard*. As well, I believe there are some media outlets here today. Audio access to the meeting can be obtained via the Legislative Assembly website.

Approval of the agenda. Are there additions or changes to the agenda as proposed by the clerk? Seeing none, would a member like to move that the agenda for the December 1, 2015, meeting be approved as distributed? Mr. Hunter. Any discussion? All in favour? Opposed? Carried.

Do members have any amendments to the minutes as distributed? Seeing none, would a member move that the minutes of the October

27, 2015, Standing Committee on Public Accounts meeting be approved as distributed? Ms Payne. Any discussion? All in favour? Opposed? Carried.

All right. The next item on our agenda is consideration of the 2014 report on committee activities. Membership of the committee has changed almost entirely since 2014; however, we are still responsible for reporting on the work of this committee as an institution to the Assembly. A draft version of the Public Accounts Committee 2014 report has been distributed, I believe, by the clerk. Does anyone have any proposed changes to the 2014 draft annual report as circulated? Seeing none, would a member move that the Standing Committee on Public Accounts 2014 annual report on committee activities be approved as distributed.

Mr. Dach. Any discussions? All in favour? Opposed? Carried.

All right. We will now move on to our meeting schedule. Committee members have been provided with the proposed schedule for meetings outside of session. The working group met last week and discussed the possibility of scheduling two consecutive days of meetings at the end of January or the beginning of February, prior to the start of when we expect the spring session to be. These would be full-day meetings so that we can cover as many topics as possible, so two full days of nothing but PAC. I call it super PAC. Are members in agreement to have two consecutive full days of PAC meetings at the end of January or the beginning of February? If so, would someone move that

the Standing Committee on Public Accounts schedule meetings on two consecutive days in late January or early February.

Ms Renaud. Any discussion? All in favour? Opposed? Carried.

In terms of dates, if members agree, we will ask the committee clerk to circulate a few options after this meeting so that we can determine what works best for most. After hearing from members, I will consult with the deputy chair in order to make a decision. Are members agreed?

Hon. Members: Agreed.

The Chair: Very well. We'll move to the departments and topics to be discussed on those dates. As mentioned, the working group discussed and put forward suggestions in a document that was made available to members, so we'll start by addressing the suggested topics for day 1. Members will recall that we were scheduled to review the government of Alberta's 2014-15 annual report, including the Measuring Up component, on November 24. For this meeting the departments of Treasury Board and Finance, Health, and Education had been invited. The schedule as distributed proposes that we reschedule this for the first meeting on day 1. Would a member move that

the Standing Committee on Public Accounts invite the departments of Treasury Board and Finance, Health, and Education to discuss the government of Alberta's 2014-15 annual report, including the consolidated financial statements and the Measuring Up components.

Ms Miller. Any discussion? All in favour? Opposed? Carried.

Next on the proposed schedule is a meeting to discuss the Alberta corporate tax administration system. Would a member move that the Standing Committee on Public Accounts invite the Department of Treasury Board and Finance to discuss the Alberta corporate tax administration system.

Moved by Mr. Cyr. Any discussion? All in favour? Opposed? Carried.

Our next motion would be to reschedule the meeting that we would have held today. Would someone propose that the Standing Committee on Public Accounts invite the departments of Executive Council, Treasury Board and Finance,

and Alberta Infrastructure to address the recommendations in the 2014 special duty report of the Auditor General.

Who would move this motion? Mr. Westhead. Any discussion? All in favour? Opposed? Carried.

That concludes our schedule for day 1.

We'll move to day 2. The first item on the proposed schedule for day 2 is a meeting of Alberta Environment and Parks in order to discuss the Auditor General's recommendations related to grazing leases. The two primary stakeholders that we would want to hear from on the same date, as suggested by the Auditor General, are the Alberta Grazing Leaseholders Association and the Northern Alberta Grazing Association. On the suggested schedule other entities are also mentioned as alternative options. We are currently proposing to allocate one hour and 45 minutes to the meeting. If members wish to invite additional stakeholders, we would review that schedule at our next meeting to add those stakeholders to the list.

If members agree with the two associations suggested, with the possibility of adding others at another time, would a member move that

the Standing Committee on Public Accounts invite the Department of Environment and Parks as well as the Alberta Grazing Leaseholders Association and the Northern Alberta Grazing Association to discuss the recommendations in the report of the Auditor General of July 2015, with the possibility of inviting other stakeholders in the future.

Mr. Barnes. Any discussion? All in favour? Opposed? Carried.

Following the proposed schedule, if a member would like to move the next motion, which would be that

the Standing Committee on Public Accounts invite the Department of Environment and Parks to discuss the recommendations of the report of the Auditor General of July 2015 related to systems to ensure sufficient financial security and land disturbances from mining.

Mr. Dach moves that. Any discussion? All in favour? Opposed?

After lunch on the same day we would invite Environment and Parks to discuss other outstanding recommendations; namely, managing Water Act partnerships and regulatory activities systems to manage the specified gas emitters regulation follow-up and management of sand and gravel resources follow-up. Would a member move that

the Standing Committee on Public Accounts invite the Department of Environment and Parks to discuss other outstanding recommendations from the office of the Auditor General.

Mr. Westhead moves. Any discussion? All in favour? Opposed? Carried.

We'll move to our last proposed meeting, related to tobacco litigation issues. Would members like to discuss the issue prior to having the issue on the floor? Mr. Cyr.

8:40

Mr. Cyr: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I came here today to talk about Tobaccogate and the need for the Public Accounts Committee to investigate this contract. The facts surrounding this contract have been causing controversy since 2011. We have potentially the single most lucrative contract awarded in the history of Alberta, and all current indications are that it was awarded improperly. The circumstances are similar to issues in the awarding of contracts in Service Alberta, which the Auditor General is investigating, except on a much, much larger scale.

This contract is a contingency contract for litigating the recovery of health costs from tobacco companies. While we don't know all of the details of the Alberta contract, we can extrapolate based on available data points from other provinces. The province of Quebec

just completed its litigation and was awarded over \$15 billion in damages. Quebec is just a bit over twice the size of Alberta, so a comparable award in Alberta would be in the range of \$6 billion to \$7 billion. We know from the data provided by other provinces, notably New Brunswick, that the contingency rate for this type of litigation is between 12 and 20 per cent, so on a \$6 billion award you're talking about a contract between \$720 million and \$1.2 billion. No single contract in the history of Alberta has ever approached that amount. Let's pretend for a second that I've gotten everything wrong by a factor of two, which still means the contract is between \$360 million and \$600 million. That would still be amongst the largest contracts ever put out by Alberta.

What do we know about this contract? We know that an impartial ranking process did not happen. We know from leaked documents that senior civil servants rewrote a memo to satisfy the whims of the minister. We know that the company that eventually got the contract did not make the first cut of the possible bidders, but then they were added to the list of bidders, and they were awarded the contract under conditions that don't stand up to scrutiny.

What else do we know? We know that civil servants in the two departments who should have blown the whistle didn't. We know that some of those civil servants were promoted to hold top-level offices. We know that the Justice department is fighting an officer of the Legislature in Court of Queen's Bench to keep hidden documents which would shine light on the whole sordid mess.

Why that is going on, we don't know. We do know that yesterday the Premier and Minister of Justice called in an eminent retired jurist to get to the bottom of this, and that's a good thing. If the government were to release the court-contested documents on a without prejudice basis, that would have been an even better thing. Either way, this file looks like it merits the full scrutiny of the Auditor General and the Public Accounts Committee. We need to understand how this happened so that it will never happen again. This contract is much larger than many of the departments of the government. We need to know how it was that the senior civil servants got captured by a tiny aura of power surrounding the Justice ministry. Remember, this was happening long before anyone ever thought Premier Redford could ever be Premier.

Something is potentially very wrong in the Alberta civil service and the procurement process for very large contracts. I was coming here to ask the committee to put this issue on the agenda for very early consideration. That was until yesterday. I know that Justice Iacobucci has been called in. The Public Accounts Committee needs to step aside. Fortunately, the Premier and the Justice minister have asked the justice to complete a quick investigation. His report is to be provided to the government by February 29 of next year and be made public shortly thereafter. I think that then would be appropriate timing to bring this matter to Public Accounts. I think at the first meeting in March of next year this committee should call all the senior officials in Justice and Health that were involved in the awarding of this contract so that they can speak to Justice Iacobucci's report and provide the committee with insight into what happened and how to prevent it from ever happening again.

Documents that are publicly available show that senior civil servants in Justice solicited expressions of interest, that senior civil servants in Health and Justice were part of a panel to rank the applicants. At some point, according to leaked documents, political staff and the minister impacted the decision in a manner which may not have been in the best interests of Alberta. The possible impact might be in excess of \$1 billion. Few files of the Public Accounts Committee are so significant.

I am hoping that at the first meeting in March of next year this committee will call all the senior officials that were involved in

awarding this contract so they can speak to the justice's report and provide the committee with insight into what happened and how to prevent it from ever happening again. I think that it would be a tremendous service to Albertans and would be some of the most important work that this committee has every undertaken.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

The Chair: Thank you. Was that a formal motion to go forward or a statement before a motion for now?

Mr. Cyr: It's a motion to go forward.

The Chair: There is a motion before the committee, that we will debate. If I'm correct, the motion would be that the Standing Committee on Public Accounts invite the Department of Justice to respond to questions concerning the awarding of the Alberta tobacco litigation contract of December 2010 following the release of Justice Iacobucci's report in February 2016. Is that correct?

Mr. Cyr: That is correct, Mr. Chair.

The Chair: All right. A motion is before the committee. We'll open it up for debate. I believe there is a tentative speakers list developing. I just want to make sure that I understand it correctly. Ms Renaud, Ms Miller, and Mr. Malkinson: were those all new topics or follow-ups to something very specific? Do you want to start new topics before we go ahead?

Ms Miller: New topics.

The Chair: New topics.

Do you still want to be on the list, Mr. Malkinson?

Ms Renaud: I think we'd like to speak to the comments made by Mr. Cyr.

The Chair: If it's fine, we'll go Ms Renaud, Ms Miller, and Mr. Malkinson, in that order.

Ms Renaud: I also read the CBC article, and, like everybody, you know, I'm certainly concerned. I'm very happy that a former Supreme Court judge, a neutral third party, will be investigating, but I think it is incumbent upon us to step back and let due process happen. To get ahead of ourselves and schedule something when we don't know the outcome of this investigation – I think we need to let it happen. Once we receive the information, we get together, we review it, and then make decisions going forward.

Thank you.

The Chair: Ms Miller.

Ms Miller: Okay. I've got a question for the Auditor General. Has this type of inquiry ever been held in Alberta before?

Mr. Saher: Mr. Chairman, I'm not sure that I can answer that question definitively. I think that there have been inquiries. I think former justices have been involved. I'm sorry; just at this moment I can't give the member a definitive answer.

8:50

Mr. Malkinson: I think all of us agree that what came out in the CBC article was concerning to all of us: some of the points that Mr. Cyr brought up, you know, that it was a lucrative contract and that there are some serious allegations. I appreciate what Scott was saying as well, that it is a good thing that this is going to be done by Justice Iacobucci because he's a neutral third party. I don't think anyone would say that a former Supreme Court of Canada justice

would have any agenda, and there's a commitment that that report will be made public and that the justice will have access to all relevant documents for that report.

I guess, to me, those are all good things, and I believe that in this committee it might make sense for us to wait and see the report and then at that time decide if we want to proceed or whether the results from the justice's report are satisfactory to us. If they are, then we could spend our time looking at other matters.

The Chair: Ms Payne.

Ms Payne: Thank you. I would like to echo a number of the comments that have been made already. I think the report that's going to be coming forward in the next couple of months is going to help shine some light on the issues that have been raised in the media about the awarding of this contract, and I think, frankly, that having a former Supreme Court justice leading that and having access to the Ethics Commissioner and the Ethics Commissioner's files is going to bring a lot of information forward. You know, knowing that the results of that report are going to be made public will provide this committee with a lot more information to see if a further investigation from the Auditor General is warranted. While I am in support of the idea in principle, I think that there's something to be gained by waiting to see the results of the investigation to determine what our next best steps are.

Thank you.

The Chair: Mr. Hunter.

Mr. Hunter: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I think that if we heard correctly from Mr. Cyr, that's exactly what he was saying. He was saying that he thinks we should bring this forward now, but in light of the fact that there is going to be this ongoing investigation by a top judge, we need to take a look at what his findings will be and that then we need to weigh in. I don't think that there's anything erroneous in that. What is our role here if we're not supposed to take a look at these accounts? That's our role, and we are the top judge in Alberta in terms of when it comes to that.

I would be in support of this motion because that's what we're supposed to do here, and I would urge all committee members to support this. Thank you.

The Chair: Any other speakers? Ms Renaud.

Ms Renaud: Thank you. With all due respect, Mr. Hunter, I don't think that we're the top judge in Alberta. We're a Public Accounts Committee, and I think that, you know, it is incumbent upon us – although I do agree with looking into this once we have the information, I think it's important that we wait and see what unfolds in the next few months. Now, it's my understanding that Mr. Cyr indicated that he was happy that there was somebody assigned to look into this and that when the report was completed, this committee would get back together, in February or March. That may well be the case, but I think that we need to wait until we get the report and we see what's in the report.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

The Chair: Yes.

Ms Gray: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Can you just repeat the motion that's on the floor? I just want to make sure that I'm fully clear.

The Chair: Yeah. I'll reread the motion for clarity. I believe it's that

the Standing Committee on Public Accounts invite the Department of Justice to respond to questions concerning the awarding of the

Alberta tobacco litigation contract of December 2010 following the release of Justice Iacobucci's report.

I believe that's the motion as it stands on the floor.

For clarity here, I think it's clear from the wording of the motion that this is not pre-empting any work that the justice would do. As members know, it often takes two to three months before we actually get to our witnesses appearing. This would be scheduling witnesses from the department, not the justice but witnesses from the department, in advance to discuss the issues following the report of the justice so that we have more information. It would not pre-empt anything the justice is doing. It would be a meeting after the justice reports.

Ms Gray: One question I'm curious about because this is surrounding litigation is: do we think that there might be any problems with the department talking to us about the awarding process because it's ongoing litigation happening elsewhere? Or is that two separate issues?

The Chair: I can let staff speak to that as well, although I imagine that if there were legal issues surrounding particular items, they would probably recuse themselves from that. Does counsel want to speak to that?

Dr. Massolin: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I'm not counsel, but thank you very much. I would think that your interpretation is correct.

The Chair: Okay. So we would all have to do our homework and see what they can and cannot answer before appearing before this committee and respect what they're not able to answer.

Mr. Dach: My concern is that as a committee we should be very cognizant of the results of Justice Iacobucci's report and, in advance of actually holding a meeting that we may schedule as a result of passing this motion, that we be prepared to revisit the scheduling of the meeting depending upon the material that comes out of that report. We don't want to commit ourselves to a meeting and go forward with it when perhaps it may seem more appropriate to wait or reconsider. Even if we do end up holding this meeting, I think we should be prepared to perhaps convene, at least the chair and deputy chair, to determine that the committee is really making the right move by scheduling such a meeting. I'm concerned about making sure that we actually weigh the results of the report and make a determination as to propriety of any scheduled meeting we might have as a result of passing this motion.

The Chair: I think most of us would probably agree that there's, for lack of a better term, a prima facie case that this is a Public Accounts issue with regard to the public administration of public monies but that we would want to be flexible in the event that perhaps the justice entirely, for lack of a better term, acquits those thought to be responsible. We would have the flexibility. I believe that as we've seen with the events of the last two weeks, the working group has certainly got the flexibility to make necessary changes to meeting schedules, times, and agendas if the results of that report prove surprising, if we have to book additional witnesses or remove witnesses, et cetera. I think that the working group would certainly take that under advisement for any changes that would need to take place on an unexpected basis.

Mr. Dach: I think we might use the words "tentative schedule" or "schedule this meeting tentatively," subject to further input by the chair and deputy chair after the Iacobucci report has been received.

The Chair: Okay. Mr. Gotfried, were you trying to get in the speakers lineup?

Mr. Gotfried: Yes, please.

The Chair: Okay. Sorry. Was anybody before Mr. Gotfried? Mr. Westhead first, then Mr. Gotfried.

Mr. Westhead: Thank you. I support this motion in principle. My concern is about the workload for the department. If they're going to be undergoing an investigation by Justice Iacobucci, is the request from our committee going to add to the workload and potentially get in the way of Justice Iacobucci's investigation?

The Chair: I really don't think it would be without much precedent for department officials to be testifying after an investigation has taken place. I think we would certainly be mindful of the department's workload and schedule it after the report's release, although I imagine that the justice would be releasing his report – the release date would be significantly after the department has gone through most of the workload involved. So we would probably book it for the first Tuesday following the release of that report.

Any further discussion on the issue? Mr. Gotfried.

9:00

Mr. Gotfried: Yes. Thank you, Mr. Chair. I just wanted to weigh in on the discussion on this. I think that the move of this issue to Justice Iacobucci is a welcome move. Number one, it brings the full force of that mutual third-party group. They can do a fulsome report on this issue. Again, I think we should allow the justice to do his work unfettered at this point in time by anything that he may be bringing forth to them. I think we would all hope that it's a fulsome report, very comprehensive and in depth and a very transparent one.

I would suggest that our committee in our role has the latitude to schedule and call any department forward at any time at our discretion. As you noted, the working group has the ability to propose that to the whole committee. As much as I agree with the spirit of this motion, I think we actually have the latitude to do everything that's in that motion at any given time. That would be my only comment. You know, I think that we all want what's best for Albertans, and we'll ensure that such processes are improved or are not felt to be in any way manipulated or otherwise influenced by any other forces than good governance and that we would perhaps already be in a position to do that.

Again, I support the motion in principle, but I'm not sure we need it in light of the mandate of our committee already.

The Chair: I would note that the point of having two days of super PAC is that we would pretty much be catching the committee up on an entire year of largely lagging behind the eight ball, and getting them all done on those two days would really bring us up to speed. If we were to hold a meeting on this particular issue at a later date, that would be taking time away from other issues. We do have a hole in that schedule.

I think the wording of the motion is such that it would certainly not be presupposing any work from the justice, but it would be examining work of the justice after the report is tabled. I think we would be cautious to note that it is not going to in any way be involved with the justice's report.

Ms Gray: I think there's been a lot of really good discussion around this, and I'm hearing a lot of agreement around the table that this is important and that we want to have the accountability standards met. We want to make sure that we're holding the process to account.

I'm wondering if we might be able to make a friendly amendment to the motion, that would borrow from some of the language I've heard here, essentially amending it to that we tentatively invite the

Department of Justice to respond to questions regarding the awarding of the tobacco litigation following the release of Justice Iacobucci's report in 2016 and a meeting of the working group. Then we'll have that discussion and look at what's in the report and move forward from there.

The Chair: Sorry. If I understand that correctly, we would tentatively book the department to meet with this committee but that the working group would meet in between the release of that report and the meeting . . .

Ms Gray: To confirm. We don't know what's in the report.

The Chair: Okay. If I'm understanding the spirit of the subamendment – we'll work on the technicalities – it would be that we tentatively book the department to come before the committee following the release of the report but that the working group meet in between the release of the report and that committee meeting to confirm the details of what will take place. Is that the spirit of it?

Ms Gray: Yes, that is. So I'm asking for a friendly amendment.

The Chair: At least in the spirit of it, not the technical wording of it, yeah.

Would that be considered a friendly amendment, Mr. Cyr?

Mr. Cyr: I would accept that friendly amendment.

The Chair: Can the clerk recommend a more proper, cleaner wording? Or do you want to propose a formal wording?

Ms Bianchi: I can read what I have to see what members think.

The motion is that

the Standing Committee on Public Accounts tentatively invite the Department of Justice to respond to questions concerning the awarding of the Alberta tobacco litigation contract following the release of Justice Iacobucci's report and a meeting of the working group.

The Chair: That would be considered a friendly amendment, Mr. Cyr? Okay.

Is there further discussion on the amendment as it now stands? Well, that's great.

Ms Gray: Maybe just check with Mr. Gotfried.

The Chair: Mr. Gotfried, any further discussion?

Mr. Gotfried: No. I think that that sort of suits the circumstances of the situation. Again, I just think that we have the latitude in our committee to do what is required to protect Albertans at any time. I think that we know we have that authority to do so. I think that this amendment is consistent with that, so that's fine.

The Chair: Very good.

Any comments, Mr. Loyola?

Mr. Loyola: No. I completely agree with the amendment.

The Chair: Very good.

All right. Any further discussion on the motion as it stands?

All in favour? All opposed? All right. That's carried.

Ms Gray: I might be superseding you – I apologize – but we now have a small window on the second day when we might be able to do other – we're no longer doing, as suggested in our agenda, the Alberta Justice discussion on day 2.

The Chair: I think that it was tentatively booked for that day.

Ms Gray: The report won't be out.

The Chair: Oh, I see what you're saying. Okay. Yeah, I see what you're saying. You're proposing that we fill the back end of that day, where we would have proposed the tobacco litigation issue. What are you proposing?

Ms Gray: Actually, I think Ms Renaud has an idea.

Ms Renaud: Given that on day 2 we have some time with this change – I know that the last time we met, the Auditor General and staff, I believe, were travelling up to the Northland school division to do some follow-up on some recommendations and some work that had been outstanding for a very long time. I'm wondering if it would be agreeable to this committee to go back and look at these things. I think these are very significant and serious recommendations, outstanding recommendations for quite a long time in many cases. It would be worth our time, again, to look at some of these issues and spend the time that we should. I think that it's very important.

The Chair: I'm sorry. To look at what, specifically?

Ms Renaud: The recommendations and the follow-up. I know the Auditor General travelled up to the Northland school division the day after, I believe, we met the last time. I think it would just be a unique opportunity to discuss perhaps anything or any other recommendations or follow-up.

The Chair: I would say to this that it's probably quite likely amenable to the chair, but with it having not been broached as a potential subject in the working group, I would perhaps make a friendly recommendation that the working group meet over the next week to discuss this. We could very possibly put that on the agenda in our meeting next week – I think it's the 8th we're meeting – and we could vote on adding that on the 8th, just making sure that it fits with it. We'll probably do that. We'll discuss it next week perhaps, and the working group will meet in between to work out the details of that if that's okay.

Ms Renaud: Thank you. Perfect.

The Chair: Very good.

To the formal other business part. I would like to note for the record that written responses have been received from Alberta Environment and Parks and Alberta Education related to questions posed at the October 20 and 27 meetings. They have already been shared with the committee members, and members who asked specific questions at those meetings were asked to review the answers for completeness. After today's meeting we will post the responses on the committee's external website.

As a personal note, I believe that members who ask specific questions, written questions, for follow-up from witnesses are personally responsible for following up on those. Not the committee as a whole but the members who ask those questions take ownership of them and follow up.

Is there any other business for committee members to raise today? Dr. Turner.

9:10

Dr. Turner: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Just going back to your previous comment, I do have some concerns about the written responses. I don't think we need to discuss them today – and we don't have time to discuss them today – but there may need to be some expansion of the responses that we receive.

The Chair: Very good. Dr. Turner, perhaps we should have an offline conversation about what you would like to see with regard to your questions in advance of the next working group meeting so that we can work it out in the working group about how we should proceed with that, and we can discuss it at the next meeting.

Dr. Turner: That's very acceptable, Chair.

The Chair: So if you would like to connect with me offline, we'll make that happen.

Dr. Turner: Yeah.

The Chair: Very good.

Any other business for committee members? Very good.

Our next scheduled meeting is December 8, 2015, with Alberta Advanced Education, the University of Alberta, the University of Calgary, and Olds College to discuss issues raised in the Auditor General's report of October 2015.

Are there additional items that members would like to discuss?

If not, I will call for a motion to adjourn. Mr. Malkinson. Discussion? All in favour? Opposed? All right. Carried. The meeting is adjourned. Thank you very much.

[The committee adjourned at 9:12 a.m.]

