



Legislative Assembly of Alberta

The 27th Legislature
Second Session

Select Special
Auditor General
Search Committee

Thursday, November 19, 2009
5:20 p.m.

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Select Special Auditor General Search Committee

Mitzel, Len, Cypress-Medicine Hat (PC), Chair
Lund, Ty, Rocky Mountain House (PC), Deputy Chair

Blakeman, Laurie, Edmonton-Centre (AL)
Campbell, Robin, West Yellowhead (PC)
Lukaszuk, Thomas A., Edmonton-Castle Downs (PC)
MacDonald, Hugh, Edmonton-Gold Bar (AL)
Marz, Richard, Olds-Didsbury-Three Hills (PC)
Notley, Rachel, Edmonton-Strathcona (ND)
Rogers, George, Leduc-Beaumont-Devon (PC)

Corporate Human Resources Participants

Jean Easton	Consultant, Executive Search
Trish Mills	Consultant, Executive Search

Support Staff

W.J. David McNeil	Clerk
Louise J. Kamuchik	Clerk Assistant/Director of House Services
Robert H. Reynolds, QC	Senior Parliamentary Counsel
Shannon Dean	Senior Parliamentary Counsel
Karen Sawchuk	Committee Clerk
Rhonda Sorensen	Manager of Communications Services
Melanie Friesacher	Communications Consultant
Tracey Sales	Communications Consultant
Liz Sim	Managing Editor of <i>Alberta Hansard</i>

5:20 p.m.

Thursday, November 19, 2009

[Mr. Mitzel in the chair]

The Chair: Thank you. I'd like to call the Select Special Auditor General Search Committee to order. I'd like to welcome everyone here. This is our first meeting, and I trust that everyone has a copy of the meeting agenda and any of the other meeting materials that were posted on the website.

Also, I'd like us to introduce ourselves for the record before we get started on the agenda. I'm Len Mitzel, chair of the committee.

Mr. Lund: Ty Lund, Rocky Mountain House.

Mr. Campbell: Robin Campbell, West Yellowhead.

Mr. Lukaszuk: Thomas Lukaszuk, Edmonton-Castle Downs.

Mr. Marz: Richard Marz, Olds-Didsbury-Three Hills.

Ms Sales: Tracey Sales, communications services.

Mr. MacDonald: Hugh MacDonald, Edmonton-Gold Bar.

Mr. Rogers: George Rogers, Leduc-Beaumont-Devon.

Ms Blakeman: Laurie Blakeman. I can't tell you how thrilled I am to be welcoming all of you to the fabulous constituency of Edmonton-Centre at yet another meeting.

Ms Easton: Jean Easton, executive search, corporate human resources.

Ms Mills: Trish Mills from executive search as well.

Mrs. Sawchuk: Karen Sawchuk, committee clerk.

The Chair: Thank you.

We have before us the agenda. Would a member like to move adoption of the agenda, please?

Mr. Campbell: I'll move it.

The Chair: Moved by Mr. Campbell. Any additions? Seeing none, all in favour? Opposed? That's carried.

Well, the mandate of the search committee is set out in Government Motion 19, a copy of which is included in our meeting materials, and as set out in item (3) of the motion, the committee will again be calling on executive search, corporate human resources, to assist with all aspects of the search process. Ms Trish Mills and Ms Jean Easton, executive search consultants, will be assisting the committee. Welcome. The item is for information purposes only unless a member has any questions in this respect. None?

This takes us to the 2009-2010 committee budget estimates. The committee budget estimates were drafted on the basis of budget estimates for the recent search committees. Any questions with respect to this?

Ms Blakeman: I'm sorry. I just temporarily phased out. Could you just repeat the last sentence you said?

The Chair: The committee's budget estimates were drafted on the basis of the budget estimates for the recent search committees.

Ms Blakeman: Okay. I'm good.

The Chair: Does everyone have those? These were posted as well. Okay. If there are no more questions with regard to the estimates.

Ms Blakeman: Well, I always have a question. Forty-five thousand dollars is just a staggering amount of money to pay for advertising. That number makes me crazy every time, and I will always ask you to give us your professional opinion on it. For the last round of advertisements that we ran for competitions, where did those people come to us from? Was it online, was it through a national paper, or was it through a local daily paper? Those are the rates that are unbelievable. I want to get the best person for the job. I want to get the word out there, but if we are not finding these people by paying for ads through the dailies at 10 grand a pop, then let's not do it. Let's use the online stuff if that's where people are coming to us from. Can you give me an indication of whether you've surveyed how we got those in the last round or the last two rounds of applicants?

Ms Sales: Actually, I'm going to defer to Trish Mills on this one.

Ms Mills: We haven't surveyed on the recent competitions as to where applicants have seen the advertisement, and applicants typically don't identify anymore in their resumé, the old style. It's definitely a question of balancing exposure and profile for a significant role. I mean, these are questions to be asked in terms of determining whether or not the expensive print strategy is the way to go or online. We definitely emphasize and have included in the plan that we'll be looking at later in the agenda a strong online component to the advertising and some networking. It's really up to the committee, I think, to give us some feedback in terms of whether or not the print advertising is the route we go. I think there's some question, too, about this budget and what the actual costs are likely to be. I think this is probably high, and we will address that through the discussion of the advertising strategy as well. So this is a budget. My understanding is that this is a budget. The ad strategy may reflect something slightly different.

Ms Blakeman: Okay, but once we've passed a budget, we've authorized ourselves to spend that, and it becomes a ceiling and to some people a goal, so I'm a little cautious about getting into that. I guess that, particularly with this position of an Auditor General, because we're looking for a professional with professional qualifications, clearly there is going to be a community of people and various professional associations through which we're going to find this person. The newspaper ads are only going to find someone who's not currently a member of an Alberta or Canadian professional association here. How likely is it we're going to find our person that way? I don't know. I don't want to quibble about \$45,000 for very long, but it's 45,000 bucks.

Mr. Lukaszuk: Well, because it is someone with extensive accounting experience that we're seeking, I'm wondering whether we would use the standard approach of advertising. I wouldn't mind hearing what was done with the previous Auditor General. You know, I see advertising in professional magazines and perhaps *The Economist* magazine and maybe the national dailies because those would be the types of publications that these individuals would be likely reading, but advertising in small dailies, in small communities where large-size accounting firms don't even exist, may not be a good, targeted approach, more of a rifle versus a shotgun approach for an individual like this.

Ms Mills: I think you will see that reflected in the advertising strategy.

Ms Blakeman: Should we reverse our order, then, and talk about the advertising strategy and then the budget? All the questions we've asked have been answered by "It will be in the advertising strategy," at which point we will have passed this budget.

The Chair: Okay. That's fine.

Just a comment, too, that prior to executive search coming on for the last one we just did, the advertising, if I remember rightly, was quite a bit more when we had a private company do this, and they'd sent in their bid. We had set up an estimate of what the quote would be for it, and instead of \$45,000 it was over \$55,000, I believe.

Ms Blakeman: That's some people's salary. That's a lot of people's salary.

The Chair: Okay. What we will do, then, is that we are going to reverse the order, as you had mentioned. I'm going to go right to the draft advertising plan before we go to the timelines, then. Okay?

Mr. Rogers, you had a comment?

Mr. Rogers: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I guess that's properly where my thoughts were as well. I would believe that at some point in the future, because of the whole changing nature of media and where people find their information, we may want to direct that we may reduce some of the national print that we might do and so on. Certainly, I don't think we have the luxury to and, for one thing, I wouldn't expect that we would see this type of an ad in many of our small dailies, but certainly in some of the larger provincial and national dailies is where I would expect this. Even there, I know there is quite a variety in the size of an ad that you would buy, and I know that those ads are grossly expensive, and I use the term because it's just huge dollars. At some point in the future – I don't know if we have the time to do that now – we may want just to change the direction.

The Chair: We'll get into that at this very second.

Mr. Rogers: Okay. Beyond that, I don't think we can afford to leave any stone unturned because of the nature of what we're looking for here, the calibre of the individual, et cetera.

The Chair: Great.

Robin, you have a comment first?

Mr. Campbell: Well, I agree it's the money, but if you read the search advertising, it's \$23,000.

The Chair: Yeah. We're going to go into that right now. She's going to go through it.

Mr. Campbell: Okay. So I would just say: let's go ahead with it, and let's move on here.

The Chair: Yeah.

Please.

Ms Sales: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I hope you all have a copy of the advertising strategy that we are recommending. It was posted online a couple of days ago. Now, the strategy has been drafted in co-operation with corporate human resources, communications services,

of course, and human resource services of the LAO. Our recommended strategy with regard to the position of the Auditor General will primarily focus on combining traditional print advertising with online job postings. The print advertising that we're recommending would focus on the *Edmonton Journal*, the *Calgary Herald*, and the *Globe and Mail* for an estimated cost of \$23,000.

5:30

As in the past we've kept the advertising costs down by designing a short ad for print that directs all of those interested to the long ad, which will actually be posted online.

There are a number of associations serving the industry, so we're also suggesting a very targeted approach that includes posting the job opportunity on the following sites. We have the Institute of Internal Auditors, Society of Management Accountants of Canada, Canadian Institute of Chartered Accountants, Chartered Accountants of Canada, and CGA Canada, which is the Certified General Accountants of Canada. As you can see by the materials, there is a nominal fee for these postings, and we're estimating the cost for the online job postings at around \$2,000. To put that into perspective for you, though, CA Source, for instance, has over 25,000 registered users, all professionals or students within the chartered accountants' field. So these are very, very targeted approaches.

We're also suggesting that we make the best use of the search committee site as well as the jobs section of the Legislative Assembly site and the site of the office of the Auditor General, postings on there or links as well. Those, of course, have absolutely no cost to the committee.

Another avenue we're recommending is liaising directly with various accounting industry associations and, specifically, the Canadian Council of Legislative Auditors.

Copies of both the long and the short ad are in your package.

I'll pass it on to Trish Mills if she has any further comments.

Ms Mills: I think you've covered it very well, Tracey. The importance of working with the institutes, as you already mentioned, we recognize. We also feel that making contact directly with the major institutes in Alberta just for an information-sharing purpose is helpful. Otherwise, I think you've covered it.

The Chair: Any other questions?

Mr. Marz: I think it is a good plan. The only thing I would like to say is that I think Laurie had a pretty good idea there. I'd like to see executive search adopt as a practice when they're interviewing in the initial go-around just to quiz them about how they found out about the job. For future decisions it might help us target our dollars a little more effectively.

The Chair: Any other comments?

Okay. Can we go back to the budget, then?

Mrs. Sawchuk: Mr. Chair, we do need a motion to approve the draft advertising.

The Chair: All right. Does anyone else have any comments on the draft advertising plan? A motion to approve the draft advertising plan, please? Moved by Mr. Rogers that

we approve this draft advertising plan.

All in favour? That's carried.

Now, let's go back to the budget again. Does the discussion on the draft advertising plan sort of clear up any of the concerns you had, Ms Blakeman?

Ms Blakeman: Well, what am I missing? If the plan before us is \$25,000, why is it in this budget for \$45,000?

The Chair: Mrs. Sawchuk.

Mrs. Sawchuk: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Ms Blakeman, when the budget estimate was done, the advertising plan wasn't done. We do these budgets way in advance, and we're thinking: okay; what have we done previously? Now, of course, after this budget proposal was put forward, we implemented this new format that executive search uses with the shorter ad. It'll be reflected in future search committee budgets, just not in time for this one. But the dollar proposal comes through at a much lower rate than what we used to pay with a longer ads.

The Chair: In essence, that's \$20,000 difference.

Ms Blakeman: So is it a big deal to just change that to 20 grand less?

Mrs. Sawchuk: It is better to leave it on the off chance that the advertising costs come through a bit more, you know, or if there are other sites that are found. The money gets returned. This is also a committee that was not budgeted for for 2009-10. It would have been budgeted for in 2010-11. It provides a way for us to kind of keep track. It is a newer system working with the shorter ads, so we may not have a total handle yet on what those costs are going to come through at. We haven't even finished this one committee, the first one we worked with, with the shorter ads.

Mr. Marz: I suppose there's also the possibility – it may be remote – that you don't find a successful candidate the first go-round, and you might have to do some re-advertising.

The Chair: Okay. Any other questions with regard to this?

Mr. Lund moves that

we approve the 2009 committee budget estimates as distributed.

All agreed? Opposed? That's carried. Thank you.

This takes us to the Auditor General position profile.

Ms Blakeman: There was a proposition to that, but it's okay. We moved on, clearly.

The Chair: Yeah. It was carried.

The position profile was included in our minutes, and it was recently updated by Mr. Fred Dunn, the present Auditor General, and staff from his office in preparation for the search committee. I believe that Ms Mills also met with Mr. Dunn to go over the profile, and she can respond to any questions that the committee might have.

Ms Blakeman: Well, you may have answered my question because I would have said that there was a statement in here that did not reflect reality. Did the Auditor General write this whole thing? Here, let me tell you the question I'm wondering about. Under section 2, Relationship to the Legislative Assembly, paragraph 2 says, "The Auditor General issues semi-annual public reports through the Standing Committee on Legislative Offices, which consists of. . ." blah, blah, blah. I'm pretty sure he just calls a press conference and lets it out, and it gets tabled.

The Chair: No, no. We get a copy. We get notified, and we get copies prior to the press conference. It's embargoed sometimes, but we do have copies before it's at the press conference.

Mr. MacDonald: Sometimes the chair of this committee has it for weeks in advance of the report being published.

The Chair: Since this chair has been here, I've had it probably two days before, not weeks. Sorry.

Ms Blakeman: All right. So maybe I'm just behind on opening my mail and haven't noticed it. Okay. Fine. If he wrote it, then I'm okay.

The Chair: Okay. So, Ms Blakeman, you move adoption of the position profile.

Ms Blakeman: I am happy to move along.

The Chair: All in favour of that motion? Opposed? That's carried.

Okay. The draft timeline. You've also had that. The draft timeline intends to have the committee's recommendation for the Auditor General available for tabling during the 2010 spring session. The search committees typically complete their mandates within four to five months of commencing the search. In this case our current Auditor General has formally advised that he will be leaving his position mid-February of 2010. The formal designation of the acting Auditor General to cover the period that the position is vacant will be handled by the Standing Committee on Leg. Offices. Our committee clerk worked with executive search and LAO communications in drafting the proposed timeline.

Are there any questions related to the draft timeline and process?

Mr. Campbell: So we don't come back again until the week of January 18 as far as we're concerned?

The Chair: That's correct.

Mr. Marz: What's the first date in January when we would meet again?

The Chair: The week of January 18 to 22 is proposed. At that time we would review the screening reports and identify the candidates for preliminary interviews.

Mr. Campbell: Well, I can only speak for myself, but I've got the 19th and the 20th open that week.

The Chair: I don't think we'll set the date right now.

Mr. Campbell: Well, it might not be a bad idea.

The Chair: All right. My apologies. We can set the date if you wish.

Mr. Campbell: I mean, it's November, and I'm already booked the 18th, the 21st, and the 22nd of that month.

Ms Blakeman: That answers our question. We need to block the time off.

Mr. Lukaszuk: Yeah, let's just block it.

Mr. Marz: I would suggest starting the week of the 25th rather than the 18th.

The Chair: Well, what that would do is just move everything a

week, and then that would also move the deadline a week. That's not impossible either.

Mr. Marz: There may be some holidays booked already.

Ms Blakeman: Well, we're all here, aren't we? We're missing one.
5:40

The Chair: What we're trying to do, because you know how long our interviews take, is that we're trying to get, say, the interviews done, certainly the preliminary or whatever, before we go back into session. Otherwise, we're looking at Fridays or whatever as well. That was kind of the reasoning behind some of this.

Ms Blakeman: So what's wrong with the week of the 18th to the 22nd? I'm sorry. What did I miss there?

Mr. Campbell: Well, I'm saying that that's fine, except I'm booked the 18th, and I'm booked the 21st to the 22nd.

Ms Blakeman: All righty. We've got the 19th.

The Chair: The 19th or the 20th.

Mrs. Sawchuk: A Tuesday or a Wednesday.

Ms Blakeman: The Wednesday is better for me.

Mr. Marz: I may not be in the province or the country.

Ms Blakeman: You're gone totally?

Mr. Marz: It's possible.

The Chair: Well, the other provision with regard to having someone substitute for you is there as well.

Mr. Lund: Well, Mr. Chairman, the only question I have on the chart is that you see "review draft advertising plan, advertisement, and position profile." You've got who's responsible: the search committee, executive search, communications. I thought we were the search committee. Well, when are we meeting?

The Chair: We're doing it right now.

Mr. Lund: Oh, I'm sorry. I thought that this was after they had it all ready to send out. That's good, then, because you scared me.

The Chair: Okay. Am I hearing the 19th or 20th?

Ms Blakeman: The 20th.

Mr. Campbell: The 20th is good for me.

The Chair: Okay. It'll be the 20th of January, then.

Mrs. Sawchuk: I think we booked two hours last time, Mr. Chair, and we can probably expect a few more applications with this one.

Ms Blakeman: Probably. So we do – what? – 9 to noon.

Mrs. Sawchuk: Yeah. Is that good? Nine to noon on the 20th.

The Chair: That one is okay with everyone else? Okay.

Given that, executive search will then be doing the preliminary interviews the week of the 25th to February 12, and in the week of February 22 to 26 we would meet to review the preliminary interview reports and establish the final interview list. We will be in session then, so I'm anticipating a Friday.

Ms Blakeman: Would that be the 12th?

The Chair: No.

Mrs. Sawchuk: The 22nd to the 26th.

Mr. Campbell: Which one are we looking at right now? Sorry.

The Chair: February 22 to the 26, that week. The top of the second page.

Ms Blakeman: Okay. Then it's Friday the 26th.

The Chair: Yeah.

Ms Blakeman: Yes. Okay.

Mr. MacDonald: That will be an all-day meeting?

The Chair: No. We establish the final interview list and review the preliminary interview reports.

Trish, do you want to speak to that?

Ms Mills: I would say a 9 to noon situation again.

Mr. Campbell: That's on the 26th of February?

The Chair: Yes. Okay.

Then that puts us to the week of March 15 to 19 to give these people notice to interview the shortlisted candidates. I don't have it in front of me whether that's a constituency week. It's not, is it? I believe that might be during Easter or something like that, and that's – what? – the 1st of April or 2nd of April this year.

Ms Blakeman: I think that no matter how this shakes out, you should end up with that week of the 29th of March to the 2nd of April. I'm pretty sure that no matter what schedule we're on, that week would be a constituency week.

The Chair: I think so. This is two weeks before that, March 15 to 19. We're looking at a Friday.

Ms Blakeman: Oh. Okay. Then we're looking at a Friday.

The Chair: Yeah. That would be March 19, and that would be all day, 9 till 5 or 9 till 4:30.

Mrs. Sawchuk: Mr. Chair, I'm almost positive that for the previous Auditor General Search Committee we landed up having more than one full day of interviews. I'm pretty sure we did.

Ms Blakeman: I think we did six.

Mrs. Sawchuk: We did four and then half a day with a couple of others. So there's a chance with this one.

Mr. Campbell: So March 19 is out: is that right?

The Chair: Yeah. As I mentioned, we are in session, so if we're looking at another half-day, it would have to be the following week, perhaps. Just so that the committee is aware.

Ms Blakeman: I think we're getting better about understanding who is actually a contender, and I'd be surprised if we had more than four.

The Chair: Then April 12 to 16 we meet to review the pre-employment checks and determine the candidate of choice. That's the proposed timeline. This would be right after constituency week, I guess.

Ms Blakeman: Well, we don't know when those are.

The Chair: Probably the 12th to the 16th. More likely the 16th of April.

Mrs. Sawchuk: The 16th is a Friday.

Mr. Marz: On January 18 to the 22nd is the committee doing the resumés, or is that executive search?

Ms Blakeman: That's when executive search brings us the binder with the kind of A, B, and C lists, and then we pick who we're going to do the initial interviews with.

Mr. Marz: Is it going to take all week to do that?

Mr. Lukaszuk: Well, we just picked the day. We picked January 20.

Ms Blakeman: From 9 till noon.

The Chair: April 16 would more likely be a two-hour or two-and-a-half-hour meeting, probably.

Mr. Lukaszuk: April 16?

Ms Blakeman: Yeah.

Mr. Lukaszuk: Morning?

The Chair: I was going to say maybe 9 till noon, April 16. Right after that, then, we'll do the same thing we did for this last one. The chair and the deputy chair will meet and then direct the clerk. Then be prepared to have one final meeting to do approvals and then present the report to the Legislature by the end of April.

Ms Blakeman: Are we scheduling those last two, or are we keeping it a bit more flexible?

The Chair: Yes.

Mr. Campbell: We've got April 16 booked, right? And then we have two more dates after that?

The Chair: Yeah.

Ms Blakeman: And the 16th is a 9 to noon one.

The Chair: Mr. MacDonald, do you have a comment?

Mr. MacDonald: Yes. Just to clarify, we can participate in that January meeting by teleconference, correct?

The Chair: We've done the other ones by teleconference, haven't we? The very first ones. We can't do interviews by teleconference, but the others we can.

Mr. Campbell: Just remember that it's about eight hours' difference between here and Maui.

The Chair: It's a three-hour meeting.

Ms Blakeman: That might suck up the rest of that 20 grand.

The Chair: All right. If everyone is comfortable with this now that we've gone through the whole thing, can I have a motion to adopt this draft timeline as revised? Moved by Mr. Rogers.

Mr. Marz: Just a comment. There was a problem with the 22nd instead of the 20th – was there? – with some members.

The Chair: Yeah. The 19th or 20th were the only two open there.

Mr. Marz: Well, the 20th is better than the 19th.

The Chair: All right. Okay. I'll call the question, then, on the revised draft timeline. All in favour? That is carried.
Is there any other business? Ms Blakeman.

Ms Blakeman: I'm going to regret starting this, but I think it's important that we have some clarity around substitutions in and out of the committee. What I've always put on the record before is that whoever was in on the interviews was in on the discussion, and if you missed the interviews, you didn't get to be at the decision-making table. I think we need to stick to that.

The new thing that's happening now is that with the substitutions we had people in one meeting of decision-making that weren't in the next meeting because they were subbed in by somebody else. I guess if I knew they were sitting there with the direction of the person and that person's notes, I'd be a bit more comfortable. I don't know how to address that, but I think we need to be careful if we're subbing people in. There needs to be a consistency in how we reach this decision. When you've got different people that are sitting in the same chair, how do we defend that to ourselves and possibly to the public if we need to? We need something around that.

5:50

The Chair: I think that that's a good point. This is an important committee, and we have to make sure that we come to these meetings.

Mr. Marz: So you're saying: from the interview process on?

Ms Blakeman: Well, yeah. I think it's important that if you're in for the interview process, then you can vote, but if you miss the interview process, we should agree that you're not voting.

Mr. Marz: The interview process starts . . .

The Chair: In March.

Mr. Marz: In March? I would agree with that. Actually, I would be probably more comfortable with a member on teleconference . . .

Ms Blakeman: . . . than somebody subbing in for them? Yeah, so that we have the same person.

The Chair: But it's going to be a little difficult to do something like that if you're doing an interview because those are closed.

It's going to be in March. We're back in session. I think that most of us will be around. I think we're going to be okay with that. But I think that all the committee members should be aware that if you're sitting in on the interview, then you sit in on the decision-making. Try to not get yourself in a position where you have to have alternates come in for you or changes.

Mr. Marz: All I'm saying is that January is problematic for some of us because that's the only month we get for a winter break.

The Chair: January is fine with teleconferencing, I think. It has been done before.

Ms Blakeman: Well, what we're essentially doing in January is looking at that list, which you could do on your own from another place. You could even e-mail it to the chair by cybbercipher and let him know what your notes are about, who you thought should be on list A and list B.

An Hon. Member: Skype.

Ms Blakeman: You could skype it. There you go.

The Chair: Mr. MacDonald.

Mr. MacDonald: Yes. Thank you. Remember that when the spring session starts, there may even be changes in membership on this committee. We don't know that.

The Chair: No, but we work with what we know.

Mr. MacDonald: You're going into cabinet, aren't you? [interjections] Both of you? There's a shuffle coming.

The Chair: Gentlemen, this committee has to work with what we know, and we'll move forward. Thanks for that observation, though.

We've got the future meeting dates covered. Mrs. Sawchuk will confirm the meeting dates we discussed this evening, so everyone will have them to make sure that they've got them correctly in their calendars.

If there's nothing else, a motion to adjourn.

Mr. Campbell: I move that we adjourn.

The Chair: Moved by Mr. Campbell. All in favour? That is carried. Thank you so much.

[The committee adjourned at 5:53 p.m.]

