



Legislative Assembly of Alberta

The 31st Legislature
Second Session

Standing Committee
on
Legislative Offices

Monday, November 3, 2025
9 a.m.

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The 31st Legislature
Second Session**

Standing Committee on Legislative Offices

Lunty, Brandon G., Leduc-Beaumont (UC), Chair
de Jonge, Chantelle, Chestermere-Strathmore (UC), Deputy Chair

Chapman, Amanda, Calgary-Beddington (NDP)
Cyr, Scott J., Bonnyville-Cold Lake-St. Paul (UC)
Dyck, Nolan B., Grande Prairie (UC)
Lovely, Jacqueline, Camrose (UC)
Miyashiro, Rob, Lethbridge-West (NDP)
Petrovic, Chelsae, Livingstone-Macleod (UC)
Shepherd, David, Edmonton-City Centre (NDP)
Wright, Peggy K., Edmonton-Beverly-Clareview (NDP)

Legislative Officers

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

Office of the Auditor General Participants

Eric Leonty	Assistant Auditor General
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Office of the Chief Electoral Officer Participants

Sunday Akintunde	Director of Finance, Senior Financial Officer
Steve Kaye	Deputy Commissioner, Interim Chief Electoral Officer
Jennifer Maskoske	Director of Operations
Ryan Phillips	Director of Information Technology

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Philip Massolin	Clerk Assistant and Executive Director of Parliamentary Services
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Amanda LeBlanc	Managing Editor of <i>Alberta Hansard</i>

9 a.m.

Monday, November 3, 2025

[Mr. Lundy in the chair]

The Chair: All right. Good morning, everyone. We'll 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'll ask for the members joining us to introduce themselves for the record.

Ms de Jonge: Chantelle de Jonge, MLA for Chestermere-Strathmore.

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

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

Mr. Cyr: Scott Cyr, MLA for Bonnyville-Cold Lake-St. Paul.

Ms Lovely: MLA Jackie Lovely for the Camrose constituency.

Ms Chapman: MLA Amanda Chapman, Calgary-Beddington.

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

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

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

Ms Tischer: Good morning. Lyndsay Tischer, human resource services with the Legislative Assembly Office.

Mr. Koenig: Trafton Koenig, office of Parliamentary Counsel.

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.

A few quick housekeeping items to address before we get to our business at hand. Please note that the microphones are operated by *Hansard*, so you don't need to turn them on and off. Committee proceedings are being live streamed on the Internet and broadcast on Alberta Assembly TV. A quick reminder to please set your cellphones and other devices to silent for the duration of the meeting.

Our next item is our 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? Moved by MLA Dyck. All in favour? Any opposed? The motion is carried.

We'll now address the 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 move a motion to approve the minutes?

Ms Lovely: So moved.

The Chair: So moved by MLA Lovely. All those in favour? Any opposed? That motion is carried.

We'll now move to our fourth item on our agenda, supplemental funding requests. First up is Elections Alberta. At this point I would ask our guests from Elections Alberta to join us at the table.

I might first start by asking the members who have joined us at the table to identify themselves for the record.

Mr. Kaye: Steve Kaye. I'm deputy commissioner and Interim Deputy Chief Electoral Officer.

Mr. McClure: Good morning. I'm Gordon McClure, your Chief Electoral Officer.

Ms Akintunde: I'm Sunday Akintunde, the director of finance and senior financial officer.

Ms Maskoske: Jennifer Maskoske, director of operations.

Mr. Phillips: Ryan Phillips, director of IT.

The Chair: All right. Thank you.

The committee is considering a request from Elections Alberta for supplementary funding for the '25-26 fiscal year. This request is separate from the request that was considered in June of this year. The office has submitted a written request to the committee, so I will invite Mr. McClure to make an opening presentation up to 15 minutes in length, and then I will open the floor to questions from committee members.

Mr. McClure, please begin your presentation.

Elections Alberta

Mr. McClure: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Good morning. It is a pleasure to meet with you once again and present our second supplementary budget request for 2025. As you know, I'm Gordon McClure, your Chief Electoral Officer. Joining me today are Steve Kaye, Interim Deputy Chief Electoral Officer and deputy election commissioner; Sunday Akintunde, director of finance and my senior financial officer; Jennifer Maskoske, my director of operations; and Ryan Phillips, my director of information technology.

This presentation is to provide an explanation as to why my office urgently requires additional funding. We face significant budget shortfalls as five events that were previously only possibilities are shaping up to become realities. The first of the events is the conduct of two citizen initiative petitions. One citizen petition is well under way, and the verification process requires a significant number of additional wage staff. The second petition with identical verification and staffing requirements has very recently been approved and is expected to be submitted for verification in mid-February. It is worth noting that a third citizen initiative application exists and is presently before the courts.

Secondly, during this fiscal period my office is now required to complete two recall petitions. Given the overlap of these activities additional staff will be required to manage and verify these recall petitions.

The legislative changes and recent comments in the media require my office to also ready itself for a potential provincial referendum in 2026. Events of this magnitude require 12 to 18 months of preparation in advance of the event, in addition to significant funding. To begin preparations necessary to deliver a provincial event of this nature, my office requires additional supplementary funding immediately.

Lastly, extra warehouse space is urgently required to address our ongoing space constraints, which will be further exacerbated as we prepare for the '27 provincial general election and events noted above. Our warehouse is at capacity and will simply not accommodate the additional equipment, supplies, and storage space needed for these events. To summarize, my office requires supplemental funding of an additional \$13,512,118.

The Alberta Forever Canadian petition was approved prior to Bill 54, the Election Statutes Amendment Act, 2025, coming into force and will follow the requirements set out in the Citizen Initiative Act as of June 30, 2025. The signature collection period ended on October 28 and the petition signature sheets delivered to my office.

This petition verification must be completed by December 27, and the results will be announced on January 6, 2026.

The Alberta funds public schools petition was received September 15, 2025, approved on October 7, 2025, and issued on October 14, 2025. This petition was approved after Bill 54, the Election Statutes Amendment Act, came into force and will follow the requirements set out in the Citizen Initiative Act as of July 4, 2025. The proponent has until February 11, 2026, to collect 177,732 verified signatures to be successful. The petition verification must be completed by March 5, and results will be announced March 23, 2026. The work to issue canvasser identification and signature sheets for this petition will commence just as we begin the verification process for the first petition. This places significant strain on our staff and resources. Any lessons learned during our first verification process will be applied to completing this undertaking. I'm not requesting funds for any additional citizen initiatives, but I'm alive to the fact that there is still time prior to our annual budget and its approval for this to happen.

There are three main cost drivers for citizen initiative petitions: the first, reviewing the applications includes expenses for legal services, which are essential due to the statutory requirements of the citizen initiative process; secondly, the petition is issued, and my office incurs expenses for verifying canvasser applications and registering official canvassers, printing canvasser identification, producing required documents such as signature collection sheets, postage and courier services for canvassing ID, communications support answering Albertans', political participants', and media inquiries about the citizen initiative process; and third, conducting petition verification is no small undertaking, involving some 60,000 to 100,000 signature sheets in total. Given the volume of material and the legislative process involved, my office requires funding to hire 106 temporary staff to complete each verification. These service agents and supervisors will run in three shifts, amounting to 12 hours per workday and 7.25 hours per weekend day for each verification period. Further, during this period my office incurs fees for IT licensing for verification of service agents and supervisors, temporary washroom facility rentals to accommodate extra staff, and the set-up of additional phone and communication systems for the service centre to conduct elector verification of their information.

My office requires funding necessary to deliver these two events and conduct the petition verification process for each. The total estimated cost to complete the delivery and verification process for the two active petitions is approximately \$2,179,620. A detailed cost breakdown is shown in appendix A that was attached to our letter. Legal services are essential for all applications due to the statutory requirements of the citizen initiative process. Without delving too far into any ongoing proceedings, there are substantial costs associated with every initiative application and process.

9:10

It is important to note that with every citizen initiative that proceeds in the future, my office will require similar funding. Factoring in the possibility of future initiatives and the cost activities and implications associated with each of them will be front of my mind as my office prepares our annual budget submission.

My office also received and approved two recall petition applications, one for Calgary-Bow MLA Demetrios Nicolaides and one for Airdrie-East MLA Angela Pitt. The signature threshold required for a successful petition is equal to 60 per cent of the total number of ballots cast in the electoral division during the most recent election. In both cases this was the 2023 provincial general election. MLA Nicolaides's recall petition was issued on October 7, 2025. The signature collection period is from October 23, 2025, to January 21, 2026, and the required number of signatures for this

petition to be successful is 16,006 signatures. This verification will be completed by February 24, 2026.

MLA Pitt's petition was issued on October 15, 2025. The signature collection period will span November 5, 2025, to February 3, 2026. The 21-day verification period for this petition overlaps the first recall petition verification process by one full week. I do not have sufficient space, staff, or equipment to stand up a second verification team at present. This team will need to verify 14,813 signatures required for this petition to be successful. It is worth mentioning the recall process and verification activity coincides with the two citizen initiative verification processes, and to say this is straining our organization from both a staffing and space perspective is an understatement.

Our '25-26 budget request did not include any budget for delivering any recall petition events. My office requires funding to conduct these recall petition processes. The costs and efforts are significant, and I do not have the human resource capacity to complete this process without engaging temporary employees. We estimate the total manpower costs to deliver and verify two recall petitions will amount to \$1,959,196 and involve some 40,000 to 90,000 signature sheets in total. My office plans to hire agents and supervisors who will work the same schedules as noted earlier for the citizen initiative verification. Freight and postage is required for canvasser identification and other materials, communications support costs as well as IT set-up costs, materials, and supplies. Rental and printing costs will be incurred. A detailed cost breakdown is shown in appendix C, attached to our letter.

Every recall petition that proceeds in the future will require similar funding. Factoring in the possibility of future recalls and all the costs, activities, and implications associated with them will be considerations for my office as we prepare our annual budget submission.

In my annual budget submission for the current fiscal year I submitted a budget estimate for the conduct of a provincial referendum. This amount was not approved, and I was advised to submit a supplemental request if it appeared to be necessary. This is, in part, one of the catalysts driving my appearance here today. Based on the now very real possibility of a referendum in 2026, my office needs to commence procurement of items that are critical to conducting such an undertaking. This will include laptop computers for returning offices and officers; the system development and other IT equipment, materials, and supplies; advertising and promotional costs to ensure that public awareness and education on voting experience changes due to legislation; salaries and wages for contract workers to support the initial process, et cetera. This funding request is critical to ensuring that if a referendum vote is called, my office will be able to conduct a referendum as prescribed by the legislation. Should a referendum not be held in 2026, my office will be able to use and leverage the materials, supplies, and any capital assets that have been acquired from this funding for the provincial general election in 2027.

Capital material costs are the main expenses in the first phase of preparing for a potential referendum in 2026. This includes IT equipment for an advanced vote, vote returning offices, corporate offices, and a service centre, formerly called the call centre. By purchasing these assets, my office anticipates a savings of approximately \$1.2 million over two election cycles versus renting the equipment. We also will be able to rent some of this equipment out to other electoral management bodies and generate a return on this investment. My office also requires referendum materials and supplies, including forms, envelopes, returning office supplies, ballot boxes, voting screens, and more. Availability of these items fluctuates widely based on supplier stock, so ordering and stocking these items provides the flexibility to continue operations in the next fiscal year rather than waiting for items to become available.

Again, these could be used, should a referendum not be called, in the next provincial general election.

Additionally, we are requesting funds for advertising and outreach activities. This will allow us to initiate outreach strategy which is aimed at engaging Albertans at all levels, including First Nations, Métis, and rural communities as well as educating electors on voting process changes. We estimated the staffing costs to increase to address our immediate FTE needs prior to the '26-27 budget. This is required to rightsize my office to perform the work now stemming from recent legislative changes. The current workload simply exceeds our present human resource capacity.

Finally, in preparation for the referendum we will be requiring immediate funding for other costs such as postage, courier services, training facility rental for returning officers and returning officers' liaisons, and contact centre services, and IT licences for our returning offices. In total the funding requirement for preparing for a referendum before our next budget cycle commences in April 2026 is estimated at \$8,660,000 and is outlined in appendix B attached to our letter.

The requirement for additional supplies and materials coupled with substantial volume of material that is submitted during the citizen initiatives and recall petitions exceeds the capacity of our current warehouse space. This space limitation needs to be addressed to ensure my office has capacity for the storage, integrity, and security of election, referendum, citizen initiative, and recall event related materials. We have quite simply reached our current space limits. My office is working with the Department of Infrastructure to identify additional warehouse space for us to rent. They have advised me that the cost of securing and leasing a suitable secondary location for November 2025 to March 2026 is estimated at \$371,900.

To summarize, I am requesting the committee's approval for supplemental funding for my office of \$13,512,118. Approval of this funding is crucial for my office to maintain a state of functionality and readiness for upcoming events and to ensure the effective, timely execution of our statutory responsibilities. The submission does not contain any projects or initiatives that may be characterized as nice-to-have or wish-list items or initiatives. I am only requesting the funds that I require to address the immediate needs that my office currently faces.

In closing, this request will allow my office to successfully meet its legislative mandates and complete these activities. It will allow Elections Alberta to continue to deliver the services that we have become expected to deliver by Albertans and our political participants we serve. It is also important for the committee to know that the referendum budget we are presenting here is a partial budget. My office plans to present a full referendum budget along with our annual budget submissions in December because a referendum budget is equivalent to a full general election. Both the general election and our full referendum budget will be part of our annual submissions for '26-27.

I would like to thank you for your time and the opportunity to present this supplemental budget. This concludes my presentation. My team would be happy to answer any questions that the committee may have.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. McClure, for your presentation.

We'll now open the floor to questions, and we'll start with MLA Shepherd.

Mr. Shepherd: Thank you, Mr. Chair, and thank you through you to Mr. McClure and his team for being here today and for their work. It's certainly interesting to get a glimpse at how this new landscape of democracy that the government has set up is working in terms of practice and in terms of cost.

I just want to begin by asking Mr. McClure: we have seen, I think at previous budget deliberations with the committee, that government members have elected to edit the budget requests that have come forward from yourself and others who are officers of the Legislature. In the event that a similar decision should be made today and members should vote not to provide the full amount that you're asking for, can you go through each of these items – the citizens' initiatives, the recall, the referendum, and the warehouse – and just for the record can you just tell us what will be the impacts on your office and what will happen to each of those items should you not receive this funding?

9:20

Mr. McClure: Well, if I may, that's a very difficult question because we have taken a very spartan view on what's required, and this is very base. In terms of the warehouse right now we are manipulating the movement of supplies in order to facilitate the space requirements we need. We're actually holding off on some of the materials we have to order, like referendum papers coming in. Paper sounds like a very small item. In our case the initial receipt is 63 flats of paper that represents enough for one single vote. However, a referendum can be multiple things. That would require significantly more paper. We don't have anywhere to put it at the moment.

Based on the height restraints within our space, we can stack to a certain height, and we are doing that and will do that. But, if I may, I can only go too high in certain areas because I do not have racking, and I'm not going to put my staff in jeopardy. But should we receive any, we would try and adjust accordingly. We are focused on providing the best service that we are able to to Albertans. We will always try and make sure that we meet the voting needs of all Albertans because we serve yourselves and we serve all Albertans, but we're serving them through you.

So should our budget not meet what we're requesting today, we would do our utmost to try and adjust accordingly to meet the needs that all the members and political participants here are seeking, but it would be very, very difficult.

Mr. Kaye: I think, if I can add, we're asking for the funds we require to deliver these events and nothing more. I guess an overarching response would be that we can eliminate something, but legislatively we are required to do certain things, and there's no getting around that.

Mr. Shepherd: May I follow up, Mr. Chair?

The Chair: Go ahead.

Mr. Shepherd: Thank you. So what I'm hearing you say is that there is no fat to trim here. What you are requesting are the funds that are required for you to fulfill the legislative obligations that have been placed on you according to the legislation that was passed by this government, supported, I believe, by all the government members at this table. So if you do not receive those funds, you will be put in a position where it will be very difficult for you to fulfill those legal obligations on what has been deemed by this government as an essential function of democracy. Is that correct?

Mr. McClure: We will do our utmost to fulfill our legislative mandate. Yes, that is correct.

Mr. Shepherd: Thank you.

The Chair: All right. I believe MLA Miyashiro has a question.

Member Miyashiro: Thank you, Chair, and thank you for your presentation. So my question is related to what MLA Shepherd just

asked. You made it clear that it's fair to say that the legislation passed is a cause for this work and the costs. I think you've also said that it'll be reoccurring for all future referendums and petitions because each one is taken differently and has associated costs. Is that what I heard?

Mr. McClure: Each petition has an associated cost with it. That is correct.

Member Miyashiro: And these costs will be recurring every time that a referendum and a petition is initiated?

Mr. Kaye: It's not a referendum. Well, if a referendum occurs there's obviously costs associated to that. I think you meant every time a citizen initiative or a recall occurs.

Member Miyashiro: Yes.

Mr. Kaye: Yes. The costs are associated to the event.

Member Miyashiro: Okay. Just a follow-up to that, Chair. So for what time duration are the physical petitions having to be stored in the warehouse? What's your requirement?

Mr. McClure: Our requirement varies based upon the type of initiative undertaken. In the case of a citizen initiative, once the petitions are received and validated, within two days of them being validated we are to destroy them, so they are not stored unless we get an injunction. Within that two-day period, if someone wishes to have them reviewed and then they would have an injunction, we would then have to store them for that purpose. For a recall vote we will have to store the petitions for verification and for validation for a year.

Member Miyashiro: There's also the issue of storing. Even for those two days you have to store the petition somewhere.

Mr. McClure: Correct. They have to be stored securely. Yes.

Member Miyashiro: All right. Thank you, Chair.

The Chair: All right. Thank you.
I'm going to go to MLA Dyck.

Mr. Dyck: Awesome. Thank you very much, Chair. Thanks for coming in here today as well to present to us. I just want to talk about the one citizens' initiative verification exercise. I think it was about just over \$1 million, and then we've doubled it with the expectation of potentially a second one. Then there's also just the amounts doubling in full cost, potentially, for any recall petitions. Is there no overlapping of systems for this? I guess I'm just surprised to see that there would be just a doubling of the process every single time. Is there no copying of any of the systems for any of these petitions?

Mr. McClure: We are replicating. The first citizen initiative being undertaken we'll be using to refine, but we will be replicating to a great extent. The costs are the incremental costs of, for example, hiring staff. The IT licensing, again, would require – if I may, you're probably referring to things such as what I'll call the infrastructure that would get purchased and held. There can be an incremental savings over time, but we don't have a dedicated space, so when these initiatives are done, right now I have them set up in one room, but I actually have to create, because there are overlapping events, a second room for people to do the verification process to keep them discrete but also keep them secure.

Mr. Dyck: Chair, can I have a follow-up?

The Chair: Go ahead.

Mr. Dyck: And the people you're potentially hiring for these: is there a crossover of where they're going to be spending their time, or is it that they are dedicated staff for a potential recall or the citizen's initiative? Like, is there a dedication to that project, or are they bouncing back and forth?

Mr. McClure: At the moment the staff that we have hired are dedicated to the initial initiative. One of the issues I'm facing with crossover: they're going to be fully engaged while the next initiative starts. If I was able, I would definitely utilize people who have already passed their security clearance, been trained, and are familiar with the process. It's going to be problematic. It's a game of logistics and finding where there's not overlap and where things will run concurrently. Unfortunately, I'm stuck with the time frames when people submit and then the clock begins. So it's the initiator who will set the time frames of how we address things.

The Chair: I have MLA Shepherd, then MLA de Jonge, and then MLA Wright.

MLA Shepherd.

Mr. Shepherd: Thank you, Mr. Chair. So through you to Mr. McClure and his team: you're requesting supplementary funding, and it's to cover the cost of the two citizens' initiative petitions, two recall petitions, each of those having a cost of just over a million. Just looking back, I noticed the by-elections in June came in with a similar price tag, just over \$1 million, though, again, that was \$1 million for two by-elections, and here we are talking about \$1 million for each petition, whether that's citizen's initiative or recall.

I just took a quick look. It looks like the requirements to trigger a recall petition are a completed application, a completed form for a chief financial officer, copies of appropriate ID, and a \$500 application fee. That's for a recall petition. Citizen initiative petition: basically the same except no form for a CFO. Am I understanding that correctly? That's all it takes to trigger a process that, pending approval, comes with an automatic cost of about a million dollars to the taxpayer. Is that correct?

Mr. McClure: If I may, a citizens' initiative also has a requirement for a CFO, but you are correct. It is approximately a million dollars. We are required to sample, under legislation, to a confidence level of 95 per cent and verify. It means that when the individual goes out with their petition and signs it, the person attests that they are able to sign it, they provide contact information. To go and sample to the confidence level of 95 per cent, we will have to go through and ensure that all individuals in the case of a recall vote reside in the electoral district. In the case of a citizen's initiative they don't have a requirement for residency within any electoral district. We first identify and have to verify that they are legitimate people, that they've probably filled out all the information, the contact information. We will then reach out, using statistical sampling provided by the OSI, which is part of Treasury, and use a methodology that's been confirmed by them to be accurate, and start contacting individuals.

I'm not sure if anyone has been contacted recently for a survey, but not a lot of people are picking up the phone these days, so what happens is that we have to actually contact a lot of people in order to get to the 95 per cent confidence level. You know, my staff and I are dedicated towards making sure that that is a verified process. The ramifications are very high, and we want to make sure that the result is something we can attest to.

9:30

Mr. Shepherd: A follow-up, Mr. Chair?

The Chair: Go ahead.

Mr. Shepherd: Thank you. It's my understanding that there is paperwork submitted on at least five or six more recall petitions, so I imagine we may be seeing you again, and we may be seeing that additional cost to the taxpayer. We will see how that plays out. But I just want to understand, then, on this, as we're talking through this cost, we're talking through that system, I did note that the manpower cost that you noted for the recall petition seems to be higher than for the citizens initiative, but there are fewer signature sheets required to verify. Can you just clarify a bit where that comes from?

Mr. McClure: It's statistical sampling. The larger the population does not necessarily affect the sample size dramatically. It will scale. In my past life I used to survey all Albertans on a 95 per cent confidence level for Municipal Affairs. I would require, on an omnibus survey, to contact 1,500 people and have confirmation. If I went to do the city of Edmonton, which is only a million people and significantly less than all of Alberta, it would still be about 1,500 people in order to gain a confidence level. I tried to explain this to my 12-year-old stepson, and he goes, "It doesn't make sense to me," and I said, "Well, that's statistics." I'm not making light of this. Statistical sampling is not a one-to-one ratio, and as a result, the costs are about the same.

Mr. Shepherd: Thank you.

The Chair: I'll go to MLA de Jonge.

Ms de Jonge: Thank you, Chair. Thank you for joining us this morning. In your presentation you talked about the different stages of a citizen initiative petition process: the approval stage, petition issuance and signature collection stage, and the petition verification stage. I'm wondering if you have an estimate for how much each stage costs?

Mr. McClure: We actually haven't summarized everything yet. I'm looking to my operations person because she's working closely with it, but we have not yet done the full examination of the process to give you a full breakdown because we're still within the first go of it.

Mr. Kaye: I think it's safe to say – sorry to jump in – that the payment of the temporary workers would be the significant portion. Obviously, we have to issue canvasser badges, we have to recruit and try and hire all of our temporary staff, which requires security clearances, so there are costs associated with that, and then we spool up the team to receive the documents, have the people on board to conduct the verification, which is 100 to 106. But I think the biggest component of the stage is paying for the wage staff.

Ms de Jonge: That would be in the verification stage.

Mr. Kaye: That's correct.

Ms de Jonge: Do you have an estimate for a recall petition, like, the different stages for that as well? Or is it the same thing, and you're just sort of working through it?

Mr. McClure: It actually follows almost an identical process. Again, we receive the names of the people who wish to canvass. They will be issued a canvasser badge. Then, again, we have to print

and track that, receive it back, and then we receive the petitions. It's almost, I say, identical, but it's a very, very similar process.

The Chair: Thank you. The next question is from MLA Wright.

Ms Wright: Thank you. I will echo everyone's thanks for all of you folks being here this morning. I've got a couple of questions about staffing. I can imagine the staffing numbers that are required to verify every single signature, and you spoke about the difficulty with people just simply picking up their phone. I don't do it, so I can imagine that most Albertans don't. I know that this is going to be a real problem for you folks. I wonder if you can just sort of take us maybe a little bit more specifically, in a little bit more detail in terms of the staff that is required for these three different initiatives, because I can imagine that there's a different level of expertise that you might be looking for with individual staff folks who are maybe in charge of a group of people. I can imagine that there's expertise in terms of training and the requirement to fully understand the legislation when you are in fact training folks. So if you could just take us through those sorts of staffing requirements in as much detail as you can, knowing that we don't have much time.

Mr. Kaye: I think Jen is probably a great candidate to jump in on that one. She's our resident expert on all things training.

Ms Maskoske: Thank you. Thank you for the question. We do have supervisors that are responsible for all validation agents, so those individuals, the training that they would have received would definitely be at a higher level understanding of the legislation requirements that those validation agents are looking for as they are going through each line of that signature sheet. Then, for the validation agent specifically, I'm looking at that extreme attention to detail, ensuring that they are understanding that the legislation does have requirements of what we're looking for, not overlooking anything, because we have to look at every single line as we're going through that verification process to ensure that the information has been completed correctly. We just need to ensure that those individuals know what they're looking for and are not missing anything.

So for supervisors, yes, training is a higher level of understanding legislation – what is the intent, what are we looking for? – and then those validation agents ensuring that they have that attention to detail, that they're not missing anything.

Ms Wright: May I ask just one more thing? Thank you very much, Chair. In terms of that attention to detail, then, are you considering as well having sort of validators to double-check the validation process itself?

Ms Maskoske: Yes. Thank you for the question. Absolutely. Those supervisors: part of their role is doing some of those spot checks, if you want to call them, throughout the day to ensure that different teams are being checked to verify that their accuracy is in fact meeting what we're looking for.

The Chair: All right. We'll go to MLA Petrovic.

Mrs. Petrovic: Thank you, Chair, and thank you guys for joining us this morning. As we know, this is going to be one of the first citizen initiative petitions and recall attempts at the provincial level. There are not previous examples in Alberta to use as a baseline for your budget estimates. I know you've explained sort of how you've developed the budget estimates, but there are a couple of things that have caught me.

First is: will you be conducting a postevent audit or a performance review related to the specific petitions and recalls? Some of the things

that have caught mine is that, you know, the bulk of the money is needed at the end of the process. So perhaps, maybe, one time it should be looked at to see: are these valid budgets that are being put forward? Is this too much, not enough? What does that look like going forward?

Another thing that caught my eye is: how can recall cost so much more than a by-election? I understand the spot checks and I understand the attention to detail, but that seems to be a significant amount more money. So if you could just expand on that a little bit.

Thank you.

Mr. McClure: Yes. The review of each initiative will result in – I hate using the word “postmortem,” but we will be reviewing each event looking for efficiencies but also where there were any rough spots along the route and refining. The difference between a recall and a citizen-initiative-type petition is in the verification that the individual that signed was residing in the constituency at the time they signed. They had to reside there for three months. So we actually have an additional layer in part of the verification process to ensure residency in that constituency whereas a citizen initiative does not require an individual to have resided in that constituency for three months as long as they are an Albertan and have resided in Alberta for the requisite amount of time. I’ll defer to Jennifer, if you have anything else that you wish to add.

Ms Maskoske: Just adding as well that with a recall there are two portions to it, right? There’s the recall petition, but there’s also the recall vote, and then there’s the actual by-election vote. Recall has two by-elections inside of one, so there’s an additional cost. It’s not just going out once to the electors; it would be going out twice, essentially.

9:40

Mrs. Petrovic: Chair, if I may have a follow-up.

The Chair: Go ahead.

Mrs. Petrovic: I understand a lot of that, and in some of these cases, you know, there may not be that successful recall. They may not be able to have the signatures. There may be flaws in it. As we know, some of that legislation is already not being followed. When we look at this, there’s a good potential for surplus funds following the completion of a citizen initiative petition or a recall process. How does your office decide how to reallocate the funds, or are they going to get reallocated into next year’s budget or returned?

Mr. McClure: The funds that are not expended, we will not be taking them to expend on other initiatives within the office. This money that we’re requesting is for these initiatives. You’re very correct in that as we verify the petitions, we actually have a point where we have to decide if it was sufficient in order to carry forward or not. At which point, if it was not, the funds we are requesting would not be required any more. However, based on the legislative time frames and the time frames required to establish things, we have to go into each of these as if it was a full event going to happen in order to be prepared in adequate time.

The Chair: All right. Thank you.

I have MLA Shepherd back on the list.

Mr. Shepherd: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Just returning again to the referendum and the costs that you’re asking for there, about \$8 million you’re asking for to prepare for a potential referendum, it looks like the large majority of that, maybe around \$7 million, is for capital purchases and materials; the remainder for sort of staff contracting and some miscellaneous. Just wondering how much of that is going to be a one-time cost, that is equipment and systems

that you’re going to be able to use again and again for future referendums, so a one-time piece? Can you clarify what’s unique about a referendum as opposed to an election that requires you to make this additional spending on equipment and infrastructure specifically for a referendum where, you know, there isn’t equipment and stuff, I guess, from electoral processes that could be used in this case?

Mr. McClure: I’ll start with the equipment aspect, and I will then defer to my head of IT. In terms of equipment, the equipment we have has arrived at its obsolescence date. It’s old. The equipment can be used for a provincial general election as well as a referendum. A lot of the infrastructure is the same. It would be serving the same purpose. The difference in capital costs for a referendum in terms of things such as paper and other – a referendum can actually be multiquestioned, for example. That will change the costs significantly over where we would be using paper for each electoral district for the selection of candidates on one slip of paper. I have envisioned that we could have multiple questions – and I’m not going to speculate what a referendum may have – versus a selection of one individual. There may be multiple questions being decided, and that would up the amount of paper, especially if you go to one per question with a binary type, yes-or-no-type response.

In terms of the other equipment, I’ll ask Mr. Ryan Phillips.

Mr. Phillips: Sure. It’s about \$7.4 million for capital purchases. A lot of that equipment is for our advanced vote equipment. When we buy equipment, we typically plan to use it for two election cycles, so that it isn’t just for a one-time purchase. We want it to be a good use of taxpayer dollars. In 2023 we were able to rent a lot of this equipment. Most of it came from Ontario. They had had recent changes in their legislation that changed their timelines and extended their blackout periods. When we’re talking about a potential referendum in 2026, we don’t know the timeline so we’re unable to rent from our largest partner. Having this equipment on hand would allow us to be responsive to any sort of event that comes up, and we would be looking at using it for a potential referendum in 2026, the scheduled provincial general election in 2027 as well as the provincial general election in 2031.

Mr. Shepherd: A follow-up, Mr. Chair?

The Chair: Go ahead.

Mr. Shepherd: Thank you. I appreciate that. Thank you. That’s very helpful.

I can appreciate the difficult position you’re in having to sort of navigate the uncertainties at the beck and call of government’s decision of when to call a referendum. As you know, it’s 12 to 18 months’ prep, so that’s quite a bit of time. You’re sort of having to wait and see what it’s going to look like. You can’t predict what’s going to be there. But I was wondering. Can you give us a sense of what the actual cost of actually conducting the referendum itself would be? I know that the 2021 Senate election referendum cost Elections Alberta about \$1 million to administer, but that, of course, was on the back of a municipal campaign. Do you have a sense of what the cost would be for a stand-alone referendum campaign?

Mr. McClure: The stand-alone we have estimated to be almost comparable to what it would cost to run a provincial general election based upon the resources required and the fact that it spans the same electoral districts in all of Alberta and its participation. Now, my memory has not served me well today, but my recall is that I believe it was approximately \$43 million to run a provincial general election, and I would extrapolate that to being the same cost it would be to run a referendum.

Mr. Shepherd: Thank you.

The Chair: All right. Thank you.

We'll go to MLA Cyr.

Mr. Cyr: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Thank you for presenting before us today. I know that I appreciate that. Now, I've got two separate questions. When we're going through this process, you're talking about the sampling to get to that 95 per cent confidence. My first question is: what does a failed confidence look like? Is there a threshold where, say, 75 per cent isn't enough, something along those lines? Can you walk me through that process of somebody may have gone down the wrong road.

Mr. McClure: Based on the 95 per cent confidence value we have to establish what a sample size should be. So without getting into all the numbers, we will go out and sample. Our first run-through is to reach out and randomly generate a sample from all the signatures that were verified. From that, we will then reach out and contact people. The standard call pick-up rate of individuals in Alberta is about 6 per cent. It varies up and down based on the issue. We're trying to increase our rate of which people pick up and answer us by preloading and contacting me both either through e-mail or a telephone call in advance.

As we work our way through the sample, it will then indicate to us. We have to hit that sample size in order to then determine at 95 per cent what proportion of those who signed the petition were valid signatures. So every person we get who says that they did not, we then go into that sample, and it would then give a statistic back as to what was successful or not successful within a plus or minus roughly 3 to 5 per cent range.

Mr. Cyr: May I?

The Chair: Yeah. Go ahead.

Mr. Cyr: Okay. With these recall petitions that are moving forward, let's say that they are unable to get to the signature requirements that they are required to in those. We are allotting money as if they are successful. How does this work if those petitions for recall aren't successful? Does this money get returned back that you don't use? Can you walk me through that process, please.

Mr. McClure: The money that we're requesting right now is not to hold any vote. It's actually to secure and do the work that's required to verify if there is something that's going to go before the Legislature and then potentially for consideration and potentially a vote. Now, I say potentially because in a policy initiative it would go before the Speaker. The Speaker could send it to committee or the House could adopt. It doesn't necessarily require a vote; it may.

In the case of a recall petition or a legislative petition there are different requirements, but we have not written into our ask for those votes that would go out because there is enough time to take it into our new fiscal year. Should any monies not be utilized, it would be returned. This is money that's solely dedicated to this, the work of verifying these petitions and making sure that they can be reviewed with confidence that this is what people have signed and then provide it to the Legislature.

9:50

The Chair: One follow-up, Mr. Cyr.

Mr. Cyr: I'm just trying to understand the process. Let's say that that 60 per cent is 9,000 signatures that they're going to require. Let's say that they only get 5,000 signatures or 3,000 signatures.

How far along in this process would we need to go if they haven't even met that threshold?

Mr. McClure: Once there's a determination that the threshold has not been met, we could cease operation. The problem we face right now is that we're in the stage of – the verification process is well under way. What we have to do is first count how many signatures there are to determine if there are enough signatures to actually carry forward with the remainder of the verification. That should be done in the next few days in the current citizen initiative. If we were to arrive at: there are not enough signatures, we would stop at that time, and the monies that I'm requesting would just pay the folks that did the verification on the signature count, and that's all.

If there is a significant amount of signatures, then to go forward for statistical sampling – we would statistically sample it. At that point, once we go through the statistical sampling, if the sample concluded that there were not enough people signing that were legitimate, because that's what we're trying to do, then it would, again, cease. However, should it be successful, it then moves on, comes before the Legislature. We then would be back saying: if you determine as a Legislature, not you as a person, that there was a need for a vote on something, we would then have to come back or have it written into our budget for next year to hold a vote.

Mr. Kaye: I think I can cover some of this off as well. Part of the challenge we face is the unknown. We don't know what's coming through the door. We know the timings. We know applicants, et cetera, but we can't spool up a verification team the day before. We have to prepare in advance for these things, and a lot of this is new for the office. We haven't gone down this road before. So we're going to look at things when they're done. You know, the first CI, when it wraps up, the lessons learned: was it more expensive? Was it less expensive? Again, it's a lot of unknown for us.

We are absolutely responsible with the dollars that we get, though. If we're not utilizing them for the function that they've been requested for – much like a by-election, if we don't hold a by-election, those funds don't go off to something else. They come back to Albertans because they weren't expended for a by-election. But a real challenge for us right now is just that we don't know what's coming through the door. We know when it's coming; we just don't know what it's going to look like.

Mr. Cyr: Thank you for that clarification.

The Chair: Thank you.

Hopefully, we can move on to our next office soon, but I do have MLA Dyck on the list, so maybe we'll let him get the last question in.

Mr. Dyck: Excellent. Thank you, Chair. I just have a question on your capital request. It sounds like it's majorly for printers. Now, it was also – I apologize. Somebody mentioned it before, that this was a replacement for current but with the expectation that generally after two election cycles you then replace your printers. Am I to understand that we currently have working infrastructure for this and that this is just a replacement of general capital for new printing and new technology instead of just putting this into a general budget request here in the spring?

Mr. Phillips: A large portion of it is actually for laptops. Printers are another component. We print the forms in the advance voting locations rather than having them on hand. Right now we don't have a stock of laptops because in the 2023 event and even going back to 2019 we were able to rent from Elections Ontario. As I mentioned, they no longer will have the capacity to rent to us in the

timelines that we're looking for. Going to another vendor, the costs are significantly higher. There was a large savings by being able to rent from Ontario. So this capital purchase is going towards mostly laptops, also printers, hubs. Those sorts of things would get used for at least two events.

Mr. Dyck: Okay. May I have a follow-up?

The Chair: Go ahead.

Mr. Dyck: Just on the capital purchases. Let's just take the referendum costs. I mean, it's five and a half million dollars. Can you just expand upon that, if that's mostly laptops and some printers, how we get to five and a half million dollars for some laptops? Now, I'm not putting words in your mouth, but the presentation was for about a hundred staff, so that's some pretty sweet laptops. Can you just expand upon how that infrastructure looks a little bit deeper?

Mr. Phillips: Sure. The hundred staff were for – this is an initiative in the recall. These laptops and printers would be for the advanced voting locations for any potential referendum or election event. We had over 300 advance voting locations in the 2023 provincial general election. Each one of those locations has a minimum of four laptops, going as high as 10, so when you start extrapolating those numbers out, and then we need to have numbers on hand for training staff, we need to have numbers on hand for our returning office staff as well, and then we need to have spares on hand just in case something goes down and we need to be able to swap it out really quickly. So the numbers start expanding out quite quickly.

Mr. Dyck: Okay. And what's the current – sorry, Chair. Can I have one last question? We don't own any currently; you've rented in the past.

Mr. Phillips: We rented them from Elections Ontario, correct.

Mr. Dyck: Okay. And that is unable to do that in the future, you said.

Mr. Phillips: With the timelines that we're looking at for a potential 2026 referendum, with a 2027 election on the heels of it, we would not be able to rent from them.

Mr. Dyck: Thank you.

The Chair: All right. Well, thank you so much. I'd like to on behalf of the committee thank you for attending today and answering our questions. We appreciate your time. The committee will make a decision on your request and follow up in writing.

At this point I would like to again thank our guests, and I'd like to welcome our guests from the office of the Auditor General to now join us.

Office of the Auditor General

The Chair: The committee has received a request for supplementary funding from the office of the Auditor General for 2025-26. This request is separate from the request that was considered by this committee in June. I will turn the floor over to Mr. Wylie for opening remarks of up to 15 minutes, and then we'll have an opportunity for committee members to ask questions.

Mr. Wylie, if you could begin by introducing your colleagues joining you at the table today.

Mr. Wylie: Good morning, everyone. It's great to be with you. On my right is Loulou Eng, senior financial officer, and on my left is

Eric Leonty, assistant Auditor General looking after the health portfolio. My name, as you said, is Doug Wylie, Auditor General.

Over to me, Chair?

The Chair: Yeah. Please proceed with your presentation.

Thank you.

Mr. Wylie: Well, thanks for the opportunity to meet with you this morning. We're here today because we need some money, and that is to do the work that has come up in the health sector. We have additional audits to do, and we have to deal with the restructuring costs as well within the health sector.

I'm assuming everyone got a copy of the letter and the material that went out. Perfect. Thank you. I'm going to be referring to that briefly throughout the presentation.

Let me just get right to it. In the cover letter we identify three areas of funding that deal with the restructuring, and then we have one amount to deal with a new ATB subsidiary, for a total amount of funding requests for the fiscal of '25-26 of \$977,000. The components of that \$977,000, as indicated in the cover letter, are really made up of three things. First is \$564,000 that deals with the restructuring costs at Alberta Health Services, then there are additional costs to audit the newly established health organizations that amount to \$335,000, and then we have \$78,000 to deal with a new subsidiary of ATB Financial.

10:00

I'd like to walk you through, if I could, those amounts and start with the first item, which was \$564,000. If you want, you can follow me along on attachment 1. You'll see on attachment 1 there is the \$564,000 in the left column, which is highlighted, and it's comprised of three items. The first is \$356,000 to audit the transactions that are attributable to the restructuring. What we need there is to assess all of the program transfers, the transfers of assets and liabilities as well as all of the financial statement reporting and disclosure considerations to deal with these restructuring transactions.

In addition, we'll need to assess all of the control environments of all of the organizations that now will be comprising the health system. Those internal control systems are vitally important because they manage all of the transactions that these organizations will be processing.

We then identify the second item of \$104,000, and it really pertains to two matters. The first is the necessity to audit the transfer of approximately \$9 billion worth of assets from Alberta Health Services, CapitalCare, and Carewest to Infrastructure and then the leaseback of those assets to the health care organizations. These transactions arise from the new Real Property Governance Act, which came into effect on April 1, 2025. Then there is an additional cost to audit certain financial statement transactions due to the allegations surrounding the procurement practices at Alberta Health Services. These procedures are necessary to address the risk of misstatements in the financial statement audits themselves. This is a standard procedure that auditors have to follow when there are any allegations relating to any, you know, irregularities.

Then, moving on, you'll see another \$104,000 item. That pertains to the requirement to conduct financial statement audits for the two new health care organizations Primary Care Alberta and Acute Care Alberta, and that's for the audit of the preceding year, ending March 31, 2025. Both of these organizations were legal organizations that existed in the prior year. However, the minister waived the requirements for the audit for that period, so this year we are now required to audit these organizations for the prior year of transactions as well as the current-year transactions.

The final item on attachment 1 is \$335,000, and this represents the ongoing cost for the financial statement audits of the four new health entities – that’s Primary Care Alberta, Acute Care Alberta, Recovery Alberta, and Assisted Living Alberta – and all of their underlying corporations for the fiscal 2026.

That’s attachment 1, Chair and committee members.

I’ll just move and ask you to look at attachment 2, and that’s a request for \$78,000 to audit the subsidiary of ATB Financial. Those costs need to be incurred in our ’25-26 fiscal year.

Chair and committee members, I will pause there. If you sum all of those items that I have identified, they total \$977,000 for ’25-26 fiscal. We simply do not have the funding to do the audit work that’s required; hence, why we are here. Chair and committee members, that completes our presentation, and we’d be pleased to answer any questions you have.

Thank you.

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

I have MLA Shepherd with the first question.

Mr. Shepherd: Thank you, Mr. Chair, and good morning through you to Mr. Wylie and his staff. Thank you for being here to meet with us and answer these questions.

I just wanted to note that this is the second time this year you’ve had to request to meet with us to submit a supplementary funding request. I’ve been on the committee now for just over 10 years. To the best of my recollection this is unprecedented. I think, through you to Mr. Wylie, Mr. Chair, that both he and his predecessor have always been very good about managing within their budget envelope, very successful in managing things. Through you to Mr. Wylie: can you provide a bit of clarity on what is making this year such an anomaly?

Mr. Wylie: Well, as I tried to indicate in the opening remarks, Chair and committee members, we’re responding to restructuring that’s occurred in the health care system. This is fluid, I should point out. The proposal that we put forward reflects all of the instances where we’ve been asked to be appointed as the auditor, and some of those are happening almost in real time. For example, last week we received three requests.

In any event, the request comes from the restructuring of the health care system, and it’s important that we get these audits done on time as well. Time is of essence. These audits are March 31 year-end, and they push up against all of the other audits that we do that have the same timeline. That’s necessary to get the work done that’s required for the consolidated financial statements of the province. These health care organizations are significant, in excess of \$20 billion, and they certainly impact the consolidated financial statements of the province. Hopefully, that answers your question.

Mr. Shepherd: A follow-up, Mr. Chair?

The Chair: Yes. Go ahead.

Mr. Shepherd: Yes. Through you, thank you to Mr. Wylie. That does answer the question. Through you to him, I’m just wondering: can you give us a sense, I guess, of how much additional work it does generate for your office to have to put together these requests, come present to our committee. In terms of your time, your personnel, your financial costs to repeatedly come to committee to request supplementary funding: does that have an impact on your budget?

Mr. Wylie: Chair, through you, we have not costed the exercise to prepare this information. I mean, obviously, it takes time. We want

to make sure that what we are presenting to this committee is accurate, that it’s relevant to help the committee make decisions based on facts. What we have presented for you today are, as best we can come up with, hard numbers. If you look at attachment 3, we have provided the committee with additional information beyond the request to highlight, as best we can, the situation, the existing organization, the new organizations, the audit costs by organizations, and the audit costs going forward for fiscal years. So we have spent some time with this, but we certainly have not costed that out.

Mr. Shepherd: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

The Chair: I have MLA de Jonge.

Ms de Jonge: Thank you, Chair, and thank you to the Auditor General for joining us today. I understand from your submission that the official supplemental funding request will be finalized for the December 5 meeting.

In the meantime I just want to ask some preliminary questions to get some context behind the request. In attachment 1, under financial statement audit of the health system entities, you’ve estimated a one-time restructuring transaction cost for AHS at \$356,000 for ’25-26 and \$752,000 for ’26-27. Through the Chair, can you please help me understand how these figures were calculated, and what specific activities or audit procedures do they entail?

Mr. Wylie: Sure. The numbers were calculated by costing the level of work that’s required to do this restructuring. The nature of the work that we’ll be doing is auditing transactions and transfers of assets, as I indicated earlier: assets, liabilities, programs. What’s happening is there’s a transfer of programs and assets between organizations, so we need to ensure that what is being recorded at the end of the day in the financial statements is the correct amount. That’s how it’s calculated.

I would maybe point out at this time, too, that these costs represent agent costs. These are costs coming from our agent to identify the costs that they’re going to incur. These are not our internal staff costs. These are costs that we are going to have to pay to an external contractor, so they’re real in the sense that they’re not relating to our operations per se. They’re what we’ll have to pay to have this work done by a private-sector firm. We use agents within our office in a number of instances, and these are essentially agent costs, so they’re third-party costs that we are going to have to pay.

10:10

The Chair: Thank you.

MLA Shepherd.

Mr. Shepherd: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Through you to Mr. Wylie, you’re requesting this, I guess, just under a million dollars to cover some of those additional costs, including auditing the restructuring of AHS, the additional costs for the audits, and then for the ATB subsidiary audit. Back in June you requested about \$275,000 to cover the cost to audit the process of desegmenting AHS well as your new work as the appointed auditor for Recovery Alberta.

Now, it seems we’re continuing. Since then we’ve continued to see announcements of new health entities, subsidiaries, and wheels within wheels, as it were. We’ve got a growing org chart in terms of both the number of branches and the complexity. I recognize, of course, a lot of these entities are housed within the four health agencies that have been stood up, so maybe they don’t require a new dispensation for you to audit them, but you have noted, for example, that when there’s a new subsidiary with ATB, it does add additional costs.

That being the case, I was just wondering if you could give us a sense of the total cost for your office so far, including what you've brought here today, what's occurred before pertaining to both the dismantling and restructuring of AHS, that being the one-time costs that aren't going to recur once the reorganization is done and your anticipated costs going forward to maintain the required annual audits of all of these new entities that the government is creating to take over the work of AHS. Or is this something that's still evolving, that you and your team are still working to wrap your heads around, which may require, I guess, further meetings with our committee for supplementary increases to manage?

Mr. Wylie: Okay. A couple of things, Chair. I'll try and deal with these in sequence. To answer the first part of your question, we provided attachment 3, which is in part to try and identify the go-forward costs. I can't give you the additional costs right now that we've incurred to date, but if you look at attachment 3, we've broken that down and put forward the numbers as best we can. You will see in the table there that these are the costs by fiscal year of the organizations themselves. So they're not our fiscal year; they're their fiscal year. We do work before the year-end and after the year-end, so it gets a bit complicated in the fiscal year split.

But let's just start with the top. You'll see for the fiscal ending March 31, 2026, that the total estimated cost is going to be \$3,141,000 to audit those organizations. The baseline original cost was \$1.5 million, so you'll see an increase of about \$1.58 million. That's the incremental cost to audit the sector. As that moves forward into the future, it does reduce. We're anticipating the change will continue to occur and that things will stabilize in fiscal of 2028. You'll see in those last two columns there that that's going to be about an \$800,000 total incremental cost to the system, and that appears to be stabilizing in about the fiscal of 2028.

That's the best we have in the way of numbers working with our agent to identify the work that's required, and that's what we've identified there for you, Chair. Hopefully that helps.

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

The Chair: Yeah. Go ahead.

Mr. Shepherd: Thank you to Mr. Wylie, through you. That is indeed helpful, and I appreciate that additional breakdown explanation.

I guess what I hear Mr. Wylie saying, through you, Mr. Chair, is that indeed we have an increase in the amount of cost to audit the health care system as it were from where we were previously consolidated under AHS. We have these large amounts that are sort of \$1.5 million roughly starting now. It will come down to about \$800,000 within a couple of years, but it is still going to be just under a million dollars more each year to audit the entirety of the system than when it was under AHS. Is that correct?

Mr. Wylie: Chair, that's correct.

The Chair: All right. I have MLA Dyck next.

Mr. Dyck: Excellent. Well, thanks very much for coming in, through the chair. Thank you for the question as well. Mr. Wylie, thanks for coming in here. I just want to talk about the additional requests to conduct audits of specifically the four newly established health entities. These entities were priorly audited under a single structure, and there was already budget allocated for auditing the former one, unified entity. Can you just expand upon why we already had budget there for an audit of a large ministry that's just gone to four? I'm making an assumption that there is already budget there in your budget for that larger dollar amount. Why is there a

supplementary request coming in when, to me, there would already be potentially money there in your current budget? It's just broken out differently. Can you expand upon that a little bit for me?

Mr. Wylie: Sure. I think two primary reasons. The first is that with the restructuring, there is the movement of programs and there is the movement of assets and liabilities, and there is also the establishment of new structures, new systems, new internal control processes, new management oversight processes, new governance processes. There's a fair bit of restructuring that is occurring, and it's not the same as auditing one control environment, one board situation, et cetera. It's multiplying a number of the I'll call it internal control processes, and then there's also the transfer of the assets.

We've tried our best on attachment 3 to kind of break those down by organization and actually cost that activity out, but it's essentially: you're creating more organizations. Eric, I believe in total now there's – what's the number?

Mr. Leonty: So it was four organizations in the past, and it's now 12. I think it's important to note that each of those 12 will have their own set of financial statements that involve, you know, testing of transactions that relate to the amounts in those financial statements, so it's a substantial shift in the number of different financial statements that will now have to be audited.

Mr. Dyck: Okay. No, I appreciate that answer. Can you just run down a little bit more detail for me on what that would potentially look like? If you're already doing financial auditing and statements for a larger ministry, I guess just breaking it apart for me might have a – you're the professional, so I'm looking for some education here.

Those ministries and those components already existed, so you were already auditing those. Simply moving them around a bit is a significant ask on the restructuring side. Can you just expand a little bit more on that for me? Like, I guess I'm just needing some clarity on the restructuring. When we already had some of these components, you guys were already doing that, and now we're just, by changing out the pieces and where they are – a restructuring is half a million dollars.

Mr. Wylie: Sure. Let me try, and I'll ask Eric to supplement. As Eric said, we had four organizations. Now we have 12, which means that we're now doing 12 financial statements instead of four, just to start. With every financial statement audit there is a considerable amount of work that goes into auditing the financial statements. When we're issuing an opinion on the financial statements, it's based on such things as the evaluation of internal controls, whether those controls are, in fact, well designed, whether they're operating effectively. Again, those controls are managing all of the transactions within the organizations. There are new governance structures in place, so those can have a significant impact on the control systems within the organization.

It isn't as simple as saying: well, this was the one audit cost that we had before; now we're just going to divvy that up amongst the organization. There is an incremental cost associated with creating new control matrices, new governance matrices, new financial statements, and they require the work of an auditor to evaluate. That, I guess, at the highest level, is a big component.

Then there's the restructuring. As I say, it's not just as simple as – what am I trying to say? We're auditing the movement of assets, and that requires us to look at the organization that is transferring the assets, how they value those, that everything coming out of those GL systems is going into the new systems. In this particular case we also have a new shared service organization that's being created that did not exist before. That shared service organization right now is designed to do a lot of these transactions for these other

organizations. That's a brand new organization with brand new systems, so we'll have to look at what those processes and systems are that are going to be processing all of the transactions for these other organizations which are planned right now and how that's all going to come together.

10:20

Chair, it is a fair bit of work to do this. This is no small undertaking. With an audit we are concerned with, you know, making sure that the financial statements are fairly represented with factual numbers in them. It's work that we're required to do.

Eric, did you want to supplement?

Mr. Leonty: Maybe just additionally. When you have a set of stand-alone financial statements – so if you start with, for example, a \$15 billion organization and if you were to spin off a particular line of business with, say, a couple million in expenses, if they have their own stand-alone financial statements, the level of work increases overall. The work is driven by the amounts and significance of those financial statements. It's not a simple addition and subtraction. There's additional work that's required when you have those stand-alone financial statements.

As Doug said, we're dealing with, then, management groups that are different across the different organizations, governance groups that are different, different processes that may exist, and then also waiting to see further clarity on how the shared services organization will deal with supporting all the different agencies and provincial health corps as we go forward.

Mr. Dyck: Appreciate that. Thank you.

The Chair: All right. Thank you.

I have MLA Miyashiro.

Member Miyashiro: Thank you, Chair, about that, and thank you, Mr. Wylie, and your team, for coming today. Thank you for bringing up the shared services corporation. That was what really jumped out to me when I looked at attachment 3. There's the new entity that is about a third of the ask for '27. I just want to get a clear idea of what the function of the shared services corporation is. Is it the majority of the financial transactions that are taken on in health in Alberta going through the shared services corporation rather than the entities? Is that what that means?

Mr. Wylie: This is evolving, but I understand that that is the plan.

Eric, I'll ask you to supplement.

Mr. Leonty: Yeah. It would include financial processes that support the various agencies, human resources, information and technology, those core functions that are intended to support all the various agencies and corporations. On the financial reporting side we understand there are still some things that are being sorted out, but we'll hopefully have clarity on that in time for finishing the financial statement audits for this year.

Member Miyashiro: Thank you for that.

The shared services corporation is what used to be considered the out-of-scope portion of Alberta Health Services, the part that wasn't direct service?

Mr. Leonty: It would involve the corporate and administrative functions that existed. The understanding is that the shared services corp would play a supportive role, so those wouldn't need to be replicated in every single agency and provincial health corp to provide some ongoing efficiencies to support those organizations. Yes, we would have traditionally audited those processes and functions at AHS

when it supported that organization, but now, with the creation of a new agency to support all the different organizations, we'll, well, once we have a chance to spend more time completing that audit work, have a better sense of, you know, what sort of are supporting the rest and which have their own independent functions that can carry on as they move forward.

Member Miyashiro: So to the best of your knowledge, things like workforce strategies and projections would start with the entities siphoned through shared services so they can budget for it?

Mr. Leonty: I can't say for certain exactly how the workforce strategies – where that would originate. But I do know that the shared services corporation is set up to perform human resource functions for the agencies and corporations.

Member Miyashiro: Okay.

The Chair: All right. Thank you. That's all of the list I have.

I'd like to thank Mr. Wylie and his staff for joining us.

Just to let the committee know, we're going to be hearing one more presentation from the office of the Ombudsman and the office of the Public Interest Commissioner together, and after we get a chance to hear that and ask questions, we will have a quick break at that point.

For now I'd like to again thank Mr. Wylie and his team and invite the office of the Ombudsman to join us at the table.

All right. I'd like to welcome our guests representing both the office of the Ombudsman and the office of the Public Interest Commissioner to this meeting.

The committee has received a request for supplementary funding from both offices for '25-26, and I believe Mr. Brezinski and his colleague would like to present the requests for both offices at once. I will turn the floor over to Mr. Brezinski for opening remarks of up to 15 minutes – you don't have to go to the full 15 – and at that point we'll have an opportunity for committee members to ask questions. Mr. Brezinski, please begin and introduce any colleagues who might be joining you at the table today.

Office of the Ombudsman

Office of the Public Interest Commissioner

Mr. Brezinski: Thank you, Chair and committee members, for this opportunity to present our supplemental budget ask. With me is Gladys Gonyoe. She's our director of corporate services. To your point, my comments will be brief. This is relatively straightforward.

As you will recall, during our presentation to the standing committee in December of 2024 related to the Ombudsman office I requested a budget increase of only 1.7 per cent. On April 1, 2025, the Public Service Commission announced a 3 per cent general increase to management and opted-out employees. This salary increase created some hardship within my office, but we found ways to absorb these increases through cancelling personal development training, deferring the evergreening of our computer equipment, as well as other measures.

On October 10 the Public Service Commission announced compensation adjustments for opted-out and excluded and position-exempt employees retroactive to September 3, 2025. The majority of my employees fall within this category. The adjustments are significant, and the impact on my office for the remaining fiscal year is \$141,500. We do not have the budget to absorb these salary increases, so my request is \$141,500 for the Ombudsman office.

In terms of the Public Interest Commissioner office the financial impact to my office related to the compensation adjustments is \$43,000. In December of 2024 I had asked for a 4.6 per cent budget increase to my office, and we received a 2 per cent increase. Much

like the Ombudsman office, we were able to absorb the 3 per cent general increase set out in April of this year, and we simply do not have, again, a way to absorb the salary adjustments.

Lastly, it's my understanding that management compensation adjustments are forthcoming and will also be retroactive to September 3, 2025. Once we are formally notified, we're going to come back to this committee for additional supplementary budget requests. We anticipate it'll be an additional \$88,500 for the Ombudsman office and \$13,000 for the Public Interest Commissioner office.

Those are my comments. If there are any questions.

The Chair: All right. Thank you, sir.

Any member who would like to have a question? All right.

Seeing none, I would like to . . .

Mr. Shepherd: Sorry, Mr. Chair.

The Chair: Oh, all right. We'll get Mr. Shepherd in here.

Mr. Shepherd: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Just a very simple, very clear request. Just, I guess, one simple question through you to the Ombudsman and Public Interest Commissioner: is this basically the same request that would have been part of your budget that you brought to us back just about a year ago? There was the budget submission from the office, which I believe included a request for funding to cover the salary increase. Government members chose to amend your budget and reduce it. Is this essentially just the same increase that would have been requested as part of that budget, then?

Mr. Brezinski: Initially on the Ombudsman side we only requested a 1.7 per cent increase. We didn't know that there would be an additional 3 per cent general increase in April of that year. On the public interest side of the office we did ask for a 4.6 per cent increase, so that likely would have covered the adjustment.

Mr. Shepherd: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

The Chair: All right. Thank you.

We'll have MLA Dyck ask a question as well.

10:30

Mr. Dyck: Excellent. Well, thank you very much for being here today. I appreciate it. Through the chair I've got a couple of questions here. A 3 per cent increase I'm seeing, but you've also been able to absorb some of that in your budget. Can you just walk us through some of the cost-saving examples and measures that you used in order to get to some of those cost savings? I understand the 3 per cent salary increase through some wage negotiations isn't something that you could have necessarily pre-emptively seen, but I am very interested in hearing how you were able to absorb some of those costs in your current budget.

Mr. Brezinski: Right. In this fiscal year we didn't have any vacancies in our office, so that had made it much more difficult as well. But, for example, for personal development and training we have a yearly budget where investigators and staff have an opportunity to enhance their skills. We had to cut that back this year. Also, evergreening of computer equipment, for example: typically it's done within the fiscal year. We had to delay that and defer it to the next fiscal year. We have a budget for outreach and engagement, for example, to raise awareness about both offices, and we cut some of the outreach and engagement as well.

Mr. Dyck: I appreciate the explanation. Thank you very much.

Mr. Brezinski: You're welcome.

The Chair: All right. Well, thank you again for joining us. I appreciate you sharing that information with us, and I'd like to thank you and let you know that the committee will make decisions on your requests and follow up with you in writing.

At this point, before we move on to a decision on the request, I would like to ask that we have a quick five-minute break and then reconvene.

[The committee adjourned from 10:31 a.m. to 10:40 a.m.]

The Chair: All right. I will call us back to order.

Now we'll be discussing decisions on the requests that we just heard, and we'll be addressing those one at a time. We will begin in the order we heard them, so starting with Elections Alberta. I see MLA Dyck has raised his hand.

Mr. Dyck: I do have two things here, but first can I just request a little extra time in the committee, that we're able to extend this meeting a little bit? I would move

up to a 30-minute extension on our meeting currently.

I'm asking: do we need a motion on the floor? I just expect that our time is going to go over here today.

The Chair: For a half-hour extension I believe that requires unanimous consent. I will ask: does any member here oppose extending our meeting by half an hour? All right. Seeing none,

we will extend till I guess it would be noon right now.

MLA Dyck, you'd like to speak on our decision on the request from Elections Alberta?

Mr. Dyck: Yeah. I would like to move a motion on this. Sorry, Chair. Can you just remind me: should I provide rationale first, or should I provide the motion first?

The Chair: It's up to you. Yeah. Go ahead.

Mr. Dyck: I'll provide the rationale and then the motion. What I heard from Elections Alberta today is that there's a cost associated with two recall petitions for roughly \$2.3 million total. Currently these aren't approved. I do think that if these get approval, then we should be looking at that once again. He requested funding for two citizen initiative verifications, and currently there's only one approved, so I would say that we need to look at that money.

Now, also, the preparation for a possible referendum, just over \$8.6 million. Much of this is after it's been approved – I think that we need to be putting that in – and much of it is a budget request. Particularly because most of what he referred to today is 12 to 18 months out, I do think this is a potential budget request for his primary budget here in the spring.

Then I do think the secondary warehouse with the current citizen initiative is a reasonable thing.

The motion I'm putting on the floor is

to amend the proposed supplementary funding request for the office of the Chief Electoral Officer for the fiscal year 2025-2026 in the amount of \$13,512,118 to a revised amount of \$1,461,710 and approve the request as amended and that the chair on behalf of the committee forward the request to the President of Treasury Board and Minister of Finance.

The Chair: All right. Are we putting that motion on the screen?

All right. We will now have our debate on the motion. I see two hands, maybe three hands. We'll start with maybe MLA Shepherd. Go ahead.

Mr. Shepherd: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Frankly, I'm astounded at the arrogance of the member in response to this request from the Chief Electoral Officer. This government chose to put forward legislation that empowered these processes and came with the attendant costs. I would certainly hope that in doing so, they actually recognize what those costs would be. The government claims they are in support of this form of democracy; they claim that they want these processes to be available there for Albertans, but when it comes down to the actual practice, the actual rub, they don't want to cut the cheque.

Let's be clear, Mr. Chair. The officers that we had here in front of us have far more knowledge and experience than the Member for Grande Prairie or any other member at this table. They've been doing this work for years. They know what's required, and they know what it takes. They were quite clear that they did not bring these numbers to us today frivolously. It was after deep consideration and trying to keep those numbers as low as they could. Frankly, again, I'm astounded that this member is second-guessing what they have brought to us. I mean, hey, I could understand if there was, like, shaving a little bit here, a little bit there. We're talking about a massive decrease to the request that was brought to us today.

Mr. Chair, what we are seeing from these members and what we've repeatedly seen with the budgets and business plans that have been brought to us by the officers is a level of meddling, of micromanagement like I have never seen. Of course, that is in line with what we continue to see from this government at pretty much every level, whether it's government with municipalities, this government with our health care system, this government with pretty much everything. They have no respect for the authority, the knowledge, or the expertise of anyone yet possess none themselves. We have seen what the result of that is with the Auditor General that was here today, as we see the massively increasing costs from the implications of this government's decisions to reorganize the entirety of our health care system, and now we are seeing the implications of their decisions on electoral legislation, much as we saw them a couple of weeks ago with the incredibly low voter turnout, the increased costs for municipalities, and the number of people who were not able to vote. That's what the expertise of this government gets us.

And now, today, this member sits here to lecture the Chief Electoral Officer on what's necessary and what's not, based on the Chief Electoral Officer simply trying to fulfill his duties under what has been legislated to him by this government. It's disgusting, Mr. Chair, and it's a wonder that anybody continues to want to work in our public service under this kind of a government. It's no wonder I hear from so many public servants who are exhausted, frustrated, looking for other work because of the level of meddling mismanagement and microcontrol under this government and its members.

I cannot in good conscience support this motion.

The Chair: I have MLA Miyashiro next on the list.

Member Miyashiro: Thank you, Chair. I would voice the same things as MLA Shepherd although I will add this is a real case of unintended consequences for a piece of legislation that was passed in the spring that this government obviously didn't think anyone would take advantage of. We believe in democracy and we believe in having people have their say and people being engaged, but this government is looking at just saying that they believe those things and really not wanting it to happen.

It seems to me that a request of this amount, that's one-tenth the amount that was asked for by the Chief Electoral Officer, is a way of just slowing down and getting in the way of processes that are already in play. It looks like it's a way of just trying to get in the way of democracy, a democracy in the democratic process that this

government put forward and that this government passed in the Legislature in order for people to be more engaged. So I, too, will not support this.

The Chair: MLA Wright.

Ms Wright: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Through you – yeah – it won't come as any surprise that I will not be supporting this as well for a number of reasons. The first is: to go from a request of \$13.5 million down to \$1.4 million is an abrogation of our collective responsibility as MLAs on behalf of the citizens of this province.

This legislation is in force. The Chief Electoral Officer is required to follow what the legislation presents to this particular office, and to go from \$13 million down to \$1 million when this office is requesting things that in my view are entirely reasonable – the Chief Electoral Officer spoke to us about the fact that the citizen initiative and recall petitions and referenda can potentially overlap; they cannot use the same staff for both. They spoke to us about the need for additional warehousing in order to store things. They spoke to us about the obsolescence of some of the equipment that they are using; they cannot use it again. They also mentioned the fact that they are unable to rent equipment from the government of Ontario because of timing concerns.

Every single question that we asked them the officer was able to answer in a very reasonable, well-thought-out way. When you are creating a budget, whether it's supplemental or not, you are projecting. This was projection: what happens if? What do we need if there is another recall? What do we need if there is another citizen's initiative? What do we need if this government decides to pursue a referendum?

10:50

He was very, very clear. If the government decides to pursue a referendum, we're looking at somewhere around a \$43 million cost. That wasn't included here, but they still need the equipment. They need to have the equipment available, and they certainly need to have trained folks to validate every single one of those 400,000 signatures that came through this first citizen's initiative, to say nothing of the one that is presently before the courts. If that particular group of folks are successful in their court challenge, then we will see another citizen's initiative come forth, and another group of citizens then will need to have their signatures validated by actual people.

We need to allow the chief electoral office to actually do its legislative job, and to ask them to cut their supplemental budget by \$12 million when, again, they are asking for wholly reasonable amounts – to say nothing of the fact that the question was asked: what would you do if we don't spend this money? "Well, we won't spend the money." Pretty simple answer. "We won't spend the money. It will be returned." This is astonishing to me, that legislators would see that this is an okay way to behave.

No, I will not support this motion.

The Chair: Thank you.

I'll go to MLA Chapman.

Ms Chapman: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I'm feeling really confused right now because I felt like the Chief Electoral Officer walked us through – first of all, when we're looking at these citizen initiative petitions, the legislative change on verification: it used to be completed within 60 days. The legislative change made by this government is that verification has to happen in 21 days. Now, for anyone who has worked anywhere – business, nonprofit, government – the faster you have to do something, the more expensive it gets. That's just a fact of the matter because you are needing to bring on a whole bunch more staff. So there is that change.

My broad confusion here is that the Chief Electoral Officer spoke really specifically about how you can't just spool up your staffing on day one of verification. Now, I understand that the members opposite here would like to hope that none of these recall petitions come to fruition, and they may or may not. But as he said: we do not know. All they know is the date by which it has to be submitted, and you cannot ramp up a workforce in a single day and have the resources you need to work through the verification process on this.

I don't know that I'm allowed to ask clarifying questions, but I'm really hoping that the government member who submitted this motion can provide some clarification for me on: what pieces is he willing to fund in the request from this officer? Is he willing to fund the warehouse space? I'm assuming referendum prep is off the table, so is that a confirmation from the government that we are not expecting a referendum to happen any time before the 2027 general election? If they're not willing to pay for the prep, I do believe that is the government saying that they are not willing to have a referendum here.

Let's take off the warehouse space. That leaves us about a million dollars in this budget request. What are you funding here? Which of these pieces are you funding? You cannot do the scope of work as presented by the Chief Electoral Officer with this budget amount that has been submitted in this motion. It is impossible. So if we can get some clarification from the other side on what of this request – are they willing to fund the citizen initiative process? Yes or no? Are they willing to fund the work that needs to be done for recall petitions? Yes or no? And a confirmation, again, that they are saying that there will not be a referendum held in Alberta before the already-scheduled 2027 general election.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

The Chair: Thank you.

I'll go to MLA Cyr, and then I also have MLA Shepherd after on the list.

Mr. Cyr: Thank you for putting forward this motion. I recognize that we're going through a new set of legislation, and I also know that Elections Alberta has also been very clear that they are fielding their way through this as well. I think that this is a reasonable motion being put forward. Should these recall and citizens' inquiries be ultimately approved, then I think that we do need to have these conversations to ensure that they have the adequate funding. At this point I wholeheartedly agree with my fellow member and what he's trying to do here. Ultimately, we are accountable to the taxpayer, we're accountable to Albertans, and I recognize that, in this motion, it does create clarity for the government of Alberta that as things get decided as we move forward, then we need to have these requests come forward.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

The Chair: Thank you.

MLA Shepherd.

Mr. Shepherd: Thank you, Mr. Chair, and thank you to Mr. Cyr for his comments on the record in support of this. I do agree that we have to have conversations about adequate funding. I thought we had one here today. I thought the CEO was quite clear in what the costs are and what the implications are. But what I hear from Mr. Cyr and what is implied through Mr. Dyck's motion is that they believe every time there is a petition, whether that's a citizen's initiative or whether that's a recall petition, the CEO should go through the process of sending you, Mr. Chair, a letter requesting to meet with the committee, going through the whole process of assembling the committee, finding a time in our schedules, all of us devoting an hour or two of our time to sit down and consider each individual request each time.

I will note there are currently about seven or eight recall petitions that have indicated to be under way, some with paperwork submitted, including one for Mr. Dyck. That is a considerable investment of the time of the Chief Electoral Officer, to have to come each time, cap in hand, to beg government members to provide the funding for him to fulfill the legislation that they voted in favour of. That, Mr. Chair, is not efficient. That is not, frankly, conservative. What that is is an explosion of bureaucracy, government middle management, and micromanagement. When we talk about trying to create an efficient system, what we have here is an incredible level of uncertainty that has been created now through this legislation and through the decision of these members should they choose to vote in favour of this motion.

Let's be clear. The Chief Electoral Officer sat here today and told us he came here with his request of \$8 million because of the comments of the Premier in the media. Now, that's not the fault of the Chief Electoral Officer for being a bit too trigger happy, Mr. Chair. That is the reality for every member of the public service, including officers of the Legislature. They watch and they monitor every word a Premier or minister says because that indicates potential future action, and they need to be prepared. It may be to the advantage of the Premier to speculate in public, on the record, about the potential of a referendum, but for the public service and for the people that have to execute on these orders, it's not a flight of fancy. Neither is it for Albertans. As the Chief Electoral Officer noted for us, that's a cost of about \$43 million for a referendum. That's what the Premier is idly speculating about.

When you maintain that level of uncertainty and then they turn around and tell the Chief Electoral Officer that when he has a petition on his table, when they've done the due diligence and the paperwork, they have triggered that process, he does not know when or if these government members will actually vote for him to have the funds to fulfill his obligations, the obligations he is required to fulfill under law. What we just heard from Mr. Cyr is that he would prefer that each and every time that happens, we go through this whole process again. No opportunity for the Chief Electoral Officer to actually build a plan. You can't plan when you live in a world of uncertainty, Mr. Chair. No ability for planning, no ability to build a functioning strategy, no ability to build an efficient and functioning system that could actually realize efficiencies like these government members are sitting and picking over these budgets for today. Those come through systematic thought, forethought, planning, and empowerment, Mr. Chair, all of the things which these members seem opposed to deny the Chief Electoral Officer today.

11:00

One other piece I want to speak to, Mr. Chair. The Chief Electoral Officer was very clear. The lion's share of these costs that are involved are about verification, the prevention, Mr. Chair, of voter fraud. Let's be clear. This government has spoken loud and long about their deep, deep concerns about voter fraud in the province of Alberta despite any evidence of it actually existing. They have passed legislation that made it much more expensive and difficult for municipalities to hold their elections in the name of eliminating voter fraud. They're happy to download those costs onto someone else. It came at the cost of individuals not being able to vote in the last election, a deep, personal cost, an abrogation of their Charter right. But what these members are telling us here today is that when it comes to something in their legislation that they passed and they put forward, suddenly voter fraud isn't a problem anymore.

It's essential that we put a citizenship marker on everybody's driver's licence to ensure that we are combating voter fraud in the province of Alberta, but when they actually have to spend the dollars to ensure that the democratic processes they put in place that

they said are so incredibly essential are free from fraud, they aren't willing to do so.

What this suggests to me, Mr. Chair, is that this government is not, in fact, doing any of this for Albertans. They are doing these things for themselves, for their own political interests. When it serves them, it goes ahead, and when it's inconvenient for them, they put on the brakes. And they don't care the impact that has on all of our public servants, our officers of the Legislature, all the other people who have to deal with the implications of their decisions. It's frankly shameful.

Thank you.

The Chair: All right. Thank you, members, for your comments.

I would like to call a vote on the motion as proposed by MLA Dyck. All those in favour of the motion, please say aye. All those opposed?

That motion is carried.

Mr. Shepherd: Recorded vote, Mr. Chair.

The Chair: So 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 have Ms de Jonge. I have Mr. Dyck. I have Ms Petrovic. I have Mr. Cyr, and I have Ms Lovely.

The Chair: And all those opposed to the motion, please raise your hand.

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

The results of the vote are five in favour and four against.

The Chair: All right. Thank you.

That motion is carried.

We'll now move on to the request from the Auditor General. I see MLA Cyr has raised his hand. Go ahead, MLA Cyr.

Mr. Cyr: Yes. I would like to move a motion, but I'd like to talk about the rationale before I go into the motion.

The Chair: Go ahead.

Mr. Cyr: All right. I'd like to refer to the letter that was written to us from the Auditor General dated October 24, 2025, to the former chair. There's two paragraphs I'd like to read into the record at the convenience of the chair.

We previously indicated that a request would be coming forward for audit software due to end-of-life. However, our RFP for this initiative closed October 23, 2025, and we do not yet have a finalized budget request in time for the November 3, 2025, meeting. We plan to bring this request forward at our December meeting with the committee.

I also believe it is prudent to inform the committee that we are reviewing recent correspondence from the Public Service Commission regarding salary wage adjustments. These changes have a potential to significantly affect a large portion of our staff. As such, we require additional time to assess the implications for both our current and future budgets and may need to submit a supplementary estimate at a later date.

The motion I'd like to move is to adjourn consideration of the office of the Auditor General's supplementary funding request and defer approval until the office submits its updated budget request in December, including any additional supplemental funding adjustments at this ...

Mr. Shepherd: Point of order, Mr. Chair.

The Chair: Sorry. Was there a point of order?

Mr. Shepherd: Yes, Mr. Chair. This motion was not duly submitted, as was required, ahead of this meeting. The member would have to first make a motion asking for the support of the committee for him to bring forward a motion that was not submitted under the standing order that was put in place, I'll note by government members, to require that process.

The Chair: All right.

Is there going to be a motion to submit a motion from the floor?

Mr. Cyr: Point of clarification. Is that correct?

Mr. Shepherd: There'll be a process?

The Chair: You would be within your rights to make a motion asking for committee consent.

Mr. Cyr: I request committee consent to move this motion.

The Chair: Okay. There is a motion from MLA Cyr. Are we going to put that up on the screen? Our first motion will be to allow for a motion from the floor. I just want to make sure I get the wording right.

We're going to ask MLA Cyr to make his motion to ask for consent for his motion to adjourn debate to come to the floor.

Ms Rempel: Thank you, Mr. Chair. This may be wording that would work for the member, but of course I would look to him to confirm. He may be moving that the Standing Committee on Legislative Offices permit the following motion to be moved without prior notice having been given pursuant to Standing Order 52.041 to defer consideration of the Auditor General's request for supplementary funding to a later date.

Mr. Cyr: That's correct.

The Chair: As this is a debatable motion, we will discuss. MLA Shepherd.

Mr. Shepherd: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I appreciate the motion from the member to bring forward a motion. I just wanted to note for the record that that this is another example of bureaucracy created by this government for the sake of control. Again we see what the implications are and the difficulty it presents for members of this committee. Let me be clear. This will be decided by a vote of the majority of the committee. Essentially this bureaucracy exists solely for the government to exercise its majority control of this committee to prevent opposition MLAs from bringing forward motions that were not submitted in advance and keep that privilege solely for themselves. For that reason alone, I will be voting against this motion.

11:10

The Chair: All right. Thank you.

I have MLA Miyashiro.

Member Miyashiro: Thank you, Chair. I think since the member opposite was great at reading the Auditor's letter, it also says in the letter,

Please note that annual audit costs are allocated across the Office of the Auditor General's fiscal years. The supplemental budget request for the current year represents approximately 50 per cent of the audit costs incurred prior to March 31 for interim audit work. The remaining costs, incurred in April and May, will be included in [next year's budget.]

What that means is that they can't get any of the preliminary audit work done if we don't give them the funding today. What that means is that all of a sudden they're going to try to cram a whole bunch of audit work into a shorter period of time, which will actually increase costs again because they're going to need more people to do it. They have a legal responsibility to get the audit work done within a certain time period. They can't do it if we put their time off. The other thing to that is . . .

The Chair: Thank you, Member Miyashiro. You will get a chance to debate this motion. This is debate on whether we are allowing this motion to be moved to the floor.

All right. All in favour of the motion, please say aye. All opposed? That motion is carried.

Now, MLA Cyr, you're able to move your motion.

Mr. Cyr: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

That the Standing Committee on Legislative Offices adjourn consideration of the Auditor General's supplemental funding request and defer approval until the office submits its updated budget request in December, including any additional supplemental funding adjustments at that time.

The Chair: This is also a debatable motion.

MLA Miyashiro, you were talking about this motion. Would you like to continue? We'll go to MLA Shepherd.

Mr. Shepherd: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Again, I am astounded that this member and other government members who appear to be prepared to support this motion think their judgment is better than that of the Auditor General of Alberta. In the time that I've been here on this committee, I've seen two Auditor Generals pass through. They are incredibly fastidious with their budgets, responsible. As I noted in my questions to the Auditor General today, this is the first time in 10 years I've ever seen the Auditor General have to come back to this committee with multiple requests for supplementary funding.

Now Mr. Cyr seems to be holding that fact against the Auditor General. Let's be absolutely clear. If there is any fault here, it is not with the Auditor General; it is with the members of this committee who think they have the expertise and the knowledge to micromanage his budget. It's an insult, but it is behaviour that we see time and time again on so many different fronts from this government. It's kind of like having the worst boss imaginable, who hangs over your shoulder, makes impossible requests, micromanages every step you take, and then blames you when you get the inevitable result, which is failure. The failure here is on this government and on the members that support these motions.

Let's be very clear about the implications here, Mr. Chair. The Auditor General does not appear at this committee frivolously. When he comes here and says he needs the funding to accomplish that work, he means what he says. So what these government members are essentially doing is crippling the Auditor General's ability to do that key work until the next fiscal year. Let's be very clear about that. The next fiscal year does not start until the end of March, months from now. So what Mr. Cyr is proposing is that we table these requests from the minister, not just to – you know, he's not even setting a date.

Oh, pardon me. We've had an update. I apologize and withdraw. He's providing a date of December, but what he is saying is: "We are deferring these requests for consideration until December. Should they be approved in December, they would be part of the budget coming forward in March." Unless Mr. Cyr is suggesting that he'd be willing to approve those supplementary funds at that time with a different motion, and certainly I would welcome that clarification

from Mr. Cyr if that's the case. Nonetheless, we are then talking about another month's delay during which the Auditor General does not have the funding to do some of the key work, which includes auditing these new health agencies which Mr. Cyr's government has put in place, compressing the time which the Auditor General will have to accomplish that work before his deadline.

Mr. Chair, the Auditor General does not get the convenience that these members can afford themselves of deferring his work. He has to make decisions and get stuff done today. So, frankly, I consider this motion to be incredibly irresponsible. It conveys incredible condescension and lack of respect to one of our most trusted public servants and officers of the Legislature. I will not be voting in support of this motion.

The Chair: Thank you, Member.

I have MLA Chapman next on the list.

Ms Chapman: Thank you, Chair. My colleague is astounded, and I remain entirely confused about what is happening at this meeting today. The Auditor General has come with a request for funding for audits that the government said yes to, right? Now, the government could have selected a different organization or agency to perform the audits required on their new health services unit – whatever it is we're calling them. Look, the government made a decision, right? We used to have four. We want to make it bigger. We want to make it 12. And I do understand that there is a lack of understanding on the other side of what an audit is. Not everyone was lucky enough to grow up with an accountant as a mom, right? So not everyone understands the process of audit. That much was made crystal clear today.

What I don't understand is: what do they think will change? What will change between now and December? How will the Auditor's requirement for additional funding to perform necessary audits change between this date and December 5, when our meeting is? And the answer is that it won't. The request from the Auditor General will still be the same, Mr. Chair, because it is still what is required to perform the necessary audits of these organizations. So I'm entirely confused what the members opposite are trying to accomplish today in deferring a request. I mean, if I'm being honest, I'm actually not that confused, because what they want to do is see a big number and they want to do that death by a thousand cuts thing, because that's the mantra, right?

Mr. Shepherd: Performing.

Ms Chapman: Uh-huh.

I will not be supporting this motion. It is ridiculous. This money is required to audit these organizations, and we should be approving it today.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

11:20

The Chair: I thank you, Member.

I have MLA Wright.

Ms Wright: Thank you, Chair. Again, it won't surprise you that I will not be supporting this motion. Much like my colleagues, I'm sitting here in kind of – I don't know – a combination of confusion and astonishment and maybe naïveté. I'm very new to this committee. This is my very first day, and this is what I am presented with. I am presented with government members who do not wish officers of the Legislature to actually be able to do their job, which they are legislated to do and which this government says they have to do. Yet we are, for some reason, unable to present them with the funds which they need to do their job, again, which they are legislated to do.

The Auditor General talked about the fact that much of this supplementary request was because of, he termed it, “restructuring transactions.” This is because the government chose to refocus AHS and break it apart into four, now five, pillars, with each pillar potentially having a whole bunch of new organizations underneath it, which then the Auditor General will have to, of course, audit. And if there’s one thing that might occur between now and the meeting of December 5, perhaps there will be a couple of new organizations, which the Auditor General might then be requested to audit as well, just to sort of, you know, add to the workload.

I was impressed with the Auditor General’s professionalism. I was impressed with the Auditor General’s answers to every single one of our questions. I trust this Auditor General to give us not only just the salient and accurate information but also a look at what the scope of that job represents. In giving us that scope, he was kind enough to say, “Oh, by the way, we’re also looking at these issues; we are also looking into the future, and we will probably have to come back to you with an additional supplementary request,” because the Auditor General and all of the staff attached to that office are actually doing their job. They are thinking in a forward manner so that we know what’s going to be coming next. That is responsible. They are living up to their fiduciary responsibility on behalf of every single one of the people who live in this amazing province. The people who aren’t, though, Chair, are the people sitting opposite us.

The Chair: Thank you, Member.

I have MLA Miyashiro.

Member Miyashiro: Thank you, Chair. I’ll continue a little bit with what I started earlier, albeit a bit inappropriately, and I apologize for that. The other thing that’s missing in this as well is that there’s a new ATB subsidiary, and this government has chosen to approve a development of the capital market arm of ATB. I don’t think it was ever intended for ATB to get involved in securities, but here we are. Is that so that this government can have ATB invest more in the oil and gas sector or in other sectors that the government wants investments in? This kind of auditing that the Auditor General is asking for is just some oversight. It’s: are they following generally accepted accounting practices for government? Are they doing the things that they’re supposed to do with the public purse?

Now, getting back to the health things, let’s be clear that the job of the Auditor General is to make sure the money is being spent the way it was said it was going to be spent. When they have to deal with new entities and they have to deal with a restructured entity, it does increase their costs. The Auditor General was very clear about that. So maybe I’m not confused like my colleagues or I’m not astounded like my other colleagues; maybe I’m more suspicious. Maybe I’m the one looking at this and going: with all the problems we’ve had in health care and procurement with this government in the last year, is this another way of just kind of masking what’s going on? Is this delay of looking at Alberta Health Services restructuring and additional costs of the new entities another way of saying: “Hey, we don’t want you to look into this. We don’t want you to look into the accounting practices of this new multiheaded entity.”

That, Mr. Chair, is something that the members opposite need to look at. Are they just blocking something for the sake of blocking it in order to avoid having some information come out to the public, or are they really interested in the public interest and allowing the Auditor to do their job? Again, the Auditor’s office cannot do their job unless this money is approved, so I will definitely oppose this motion.

The Chair: All right. Thank you, Member.

Are there any other members who wish to speak to the motion? I don’t see any. At this point, we will call the vote.

All those in favour of the motion, please say aye. All those 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 have Ms de Jonge, I have Mr. Dyck, I have Mrs. Petrovic, I have Mr. Cyr, and I have Ms Lovely.

The Chair: All right. All those opposed to the motion?

Ms Rempel: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I have Member Miyashiro, I have Mr. Shepherd, I have Ms Wright, and I have Ms Chapman. I have five votes in favour and four against.

The Chair: All right. Thank you.

That motion is carried.

We’ll move on to the office of the Ombudsman. I believe we heard these reports together, but we will be considering their requests separately. We’ll begin with the office of the Ombudsman. They have a request for \$141,500 in supplementary funding, the office of the Ombudsman.

MLA Dyck.

Mr. Dyck: Yeah. Thank you. Let me just pull up my motion here, Chair. My motion is that

the Standing Committee on Legislative Offices approve the request from the office of the Ombudsman for supplementary funding in the amount of \$141,500 for the 2025-2026 fiscal year and that the chair, on behalf of the committee, forward the request to the President of Treasury Board and Minister of Finance.

I think we heard today that he’s been able to absorb much of this increase into his budget. That’s respectable, and I believe that we should approve this budget ask.

Thank you.

The Chair: Thank you, Member.

Are there any members wishing to join the debate on this motion? All right. I don’t see any, so I’d like to call the vote.

All those in favour of the motion, please say aye. Any opposed? All right.

That motion is carried.

We’ll continue on to the office of the Public Interest Commissioner. It looks like MLA Dyck is ready to move again.

Mr. Dyck: Excellent. Thank you, Chair. I really appreciate it. I’ll move a motion here that

the Standing Committee on Legislative Offices approve the request from the office of the Public Interest Commissioner for supplementary funding in the amount of \$43,000 for the 2025-2026 fiscal year and that the chair, on behalf of the committee, forward the request to the President of Treasury Board and Minister of Finance.

Once again, we’ve seen that he, in his current budget, was able to find much of this and that this is due to some collective bargaining, so I do support this motion here for \$43,000.

The Chair: Thank you, Member.

Are there any members wishing to comment on this motion? Seeing none, I will call the vote.

All those in favour of the motion, please say aye. Any opposed? That motion is carried.

The next item on our agenda is discussion on the officers of the Legislature; section (a), officer contracts, and section (b), annual compensation review. I'll note that the next items on the agenda include officer contracts and the annual compensation review for the officers of the Legislature.

11:30

To respect the privacy of the officers, I recommend that the committee along with the appropriate Legislative Assembly Office staff consider moving in camera for this discussion. I'll ask if there is any member willing to make that motion. MLA Dyck. Moved by MLA Dyck that

the Standing Committee on Legislative Offices meet in camera to discuss officer contracts and conduct the annual compensation review for the officers of the Legislature and that required staff from the Legislative Assembly Office remain in attendance.

Any discussion on that motion?

Seeing none, I'll call the vote. All those in favour, please say aye. Any opposed? All right. That motion is carried.

We'll now pause to allow staff to leave the room.

[The committee met in camera from 11:30 a.m. to 11:48 a.m.]

The Chair: Okay. Thank you, everyone. We are now back on the record. Just a quick reminder to everyone that *Hansard* will be operating the microphones again.

Our first item of consideration back on the record is officer contracts. I believe MLA Cyr caught my eye and would like to make a motion. MLA Cyr.

Mr. Cyr: Yes, that the Standing Committee on Legislative Offices approve the compensation adjustment for the officers . . .

The Chair: Sorry, MLA Cyr.

Mr. Cyr: Am I jumping ahead?

The Chair: I think we're on the officer contracts.

Mr. Cyr: There we go. Let's try again.

That the Standing Committee on Legislative Offices recommend to the Government House Leader – no, that's not the one either.

How about I read it off the screen? That the Standing Committee on Legislative Offices . . .

The Chair: We'll let MLA Cyr – I believe that's the one he's trying to move.

Mr. Cyr: All right. That

the Standing Committee on Legislative Offices recommend to the Government House Leader that the motion be introduced in the Assembly to establish a special committee to search for a candidate for the position of the Auditor General.

The Chair: Thank you, MLA Cyr.

We have a debate on this motion. I'll go to MLA Shepherd.

Mr. Shepherd: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I speak against this motion. Let it be known that our current Auditor General, Mr. Doug Wylie, sent a letter to us on this committee indicating that he would like to serve a further two years in this role. Mr. Wylie is willing, able, and capable.

We are currently in a position where Mr. Wylie is conducting investigations of this government. We are awaiting his report on the DynaLife situation whereby this government wasted hundreds of millions of taxpayer dollars. After a four-year effort to privatize the entirety of lab services in the province of Alberta and then

experiencing abject failure, they had to spend millions of taxpayer dollars to buy it back out and bring it back into the public sphere. Mr. Wylie's report on that is outstanding.

Mr. Wylie is also currently in the process of conducting an investigation into what we on our side have termed the corrupt care scandal, that being seemingly credible allegations that we had large-dollar contracts given without due and proper scrutiny to supporters and friends of members of this government and their political staff. Both of those investigations are still ongoing, and Mr. Wylie is overseeing them. Mr. Wylie is also in the process of doing the initial audits for the dissolution of Alberta Health Services under this government's orders and the creation of a large number of new health entities, again at the direction and order of this government.

All of this, Mr. Chair, is incredibly significant work. It makes no sense to remove a capable and experienced public servant, officer of this Legislature from his role in the midst of such significant work that has such significant potential impact for the people of Alberta, incredibly essential scrutiny, daylight into dark corners of this government's actions. It is hard, it is difficult, it is nigh on impossible to read this motion from Mr. Cyr on behalf of his government colleagues as anything but an attempt to interfere with the work of Mr. Wylie, to divert and detour from these essential investigations, to make it more difficult for the people of Alberta to get the answers they rightfully deserve.

It is shameful, Mr. Chair, that this government is effectively choosing to fire an Auditor General doing such important work on behalf of the people, who has shown his due diligence, his incredibly high principle, to choose to effectively fire him in the midst of this significant work, these significant investigations, to strike a committee where these government members will hold the majority, let's be clear, and they will have the ability to appoint the individual of their liking to take on this crucial and essential role. Let's be clear. This is a government that is well beyond having any trust from Albertans that they would not engage in some level of political interference in that process.

The Chair: I have MLA Cyr.

Mr. Shepherd: Mr. Chair, I was not done. I apologize. I will try to keep my dramatic pauses a bit briefer.

What I will say, Mr. Chair, is that we have seen a lot of reprehensible behaviour on the record today, incredible disrespect and condescension towards people who are working on behalf of Albertans in a way that this government and its ministers clearly are not. I want to be absolutely clear to the government members here today that we are not going to let this go. We are going to take this to the people of Alberta, and we are going to continue to build on the legacy that they have chosen to leave for themselves.

This decision today should they vote in support of this motion, let me be clear, is only going to further erode their position, the waning level of trust that they still have left from Albertans, especially in the wake of the decision they just made one week ago, that unprecedented decision to strip rights from Albertans with the notwithstanding clause. This is part and parcel of the same arrogance and entitlement that has brought governments down in Alberta. I would not be surprised to see if that's what's going to be their end too.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

11:55

The Chair: MLA Cyr.

Mr. Cyr: Thank you, and I thank the member for his thoughts, even though I may not fully agree with them. I sat on the Select Special Auditor General Search Committee in my first term. It was a privilege to choose the current Auditor General that we have, and

to suggest that this is malicious in any way beyond a mechanic of what our committees are required to do, which is to ensure that we always have the best person for the situation.

Now, at no point is this terminating Mr. Wylie. As a matter of fact, at every point here the allegation that we're firing him is completely false. The reason I'm saying that is that Mr. Wylie is able to put his name forward for the position again, and if he is successful in going through this process, which I've already gone through – and it's shameful to see the politicization of this process when we hadn't done this in my first term. The Wildrose at the time worked with the NDP government at the time. At no point did we go and viciously attack for saying: let's move forward and see if Mr. Wylie can get another eight years instead of two. This seems to be a better pathway than going down the road of unfinished business.

I will say that when it comes to myself I know that for Albertans we want the best person to be put forward. If that is Mr. Wylie again, then whoever the committee should that be struck from the Legislature, I will support that Auditor General going forward. But to suggest that we're trying to do some nefarious act by moving forward this request: that's completely ludicrous and insulting.

Thank you.

The Chair: Thank you, MLA Cyr. I notice we're up against the clock. I would ask for unanimous consent for another brief extension. These are very important discussions. So is there anyone who is opposed to another brief extension to our meeting? All right, seeing none, we are able to continue.

I believe MLA Shepherd had his hand up again.

Mr. Shepherd: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Acknowledging the time, I will be brief. I just wanted to respond briefly to Mr. Cyr, who talked about requirements of the committee. Let's be absolutely clear. There is abundant past precedent for this committee to offer one- or two-year extensions to officers of the Legislature, specifically when they are in a position, like Mr. Wylie is in, where they have significant work they are undertaking which requires just a little bit longer to complete. So any suggestion that this is anomalous or unusual or that we are bound as a committee by anything is quite contrary to the facts.

The reality is that if these members wished, they could give Mr. Wylie the additional two years he has requested to continue the excellent work he has done and to complete the significant tasks he is doing on behalf of Albertans.

Thank you.

The Chair: All right. Thank you.

So, having heard discussion on this motion, I'd like to call the question. All those in favour, please say aye. All those opposed?

That motion is carried.

Mr. Shepherd: Recorded vote, Mr. Chair.

The Chair: We have a request for a recorded vote. 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 have Ms de Jonge, I have Mr. Dyck, I have Ms Petrovic, I have Mr. Cyr, and I have Ms Lovely.

The Chair: All right, all those opposed to the motion, please raise your hands.

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

I have five votes in favour and four against.

The Chair: All right. Thank you.

That motion is carried.

We are almost home, folks. One more. Our next item is the annual compensation review. I will open the floor for any potential motions.

I see MLA Cyr.

Mr. Cyr: I had jumped the gun a little bit last time, so hopefully I get the right motion this time. I move that

the Standing Committee on Legislative Offices approve the compensation adjustment for the officers of the Legislature that is equal to any general increase or other salary modifier provided to senior officials in the Alberta public service during a 12-month period, commencing November 18, 2025.

The Chair: All right. Having heard and seen the motion, is there any discussion on this motion? MLA Shepherd.

Mr. Shepherd: I'll be brief, Mr. Chair. I just want to say that I support this motion, and I'm glad that after many of the decisions we have seen today we can at least end today on this motion with a little bit of respect for the officers of the Legislature.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

The Chair: Is there anyone else? Seeing none, I'll call the question. All those in favour of the motion, please say. Any opposed?

That motion is carried.

I think we can move through the rest of our agenda fairly quickly here. Under other business we have a report on the audit results of the office of the Auditor General. As committee members are aware, it is this committee that is responsible for arranging for the annual audit of the office of the Auditor General. We have an agreement in place with the firm of St. Arnaud Pinsent Steman to conduct this work for us through 2027.

As part of the annual audit process on July 22 the former chair and deputy chair met with the audit team, the Auditor General, and senior staff from his office. At that time the '24-25 audit was completed with no issues identified. The Auditor General will include the final audit documents in his office's annual report. As always, committee members will have the opportunity to raise any questions they have at the upcoming budget meeting.

Are there any other items for discussion under other business? MLA Chapman.

Ms Chapman: Mr. Chair, if I may ask, there was a letter on – oh, my gosh – April 29. It was the previous chair that had filed this letter asking for a follow-up from officials from the Ministry of Seniors, Community and Social Services relating back to a discussion we had in committee on February 7, 2025.

Now, the understanding I've been given is that when we request information from a ministry, a standard amount of time for them to provide a response is 30 days. We're clearly well past the 30 days at this point. I'm wondering if the new chair has plans to follow up and to get that information that we requested.

Now, again, this was in discussion about the office of the Child and Youth Advocate annual report. We're a bit past that discussion, but of course it does come up again every year, and I think that it's still relevant information that we would be looking for from the ministry.

The Chair: Thank you, MLA Chapman. Yes. We will send a reminder letter as per your request.

Ms Chapman: Thank you, Chair.

The Chair: All right. The next meeting date: our next meeting is scheduled for December 5, 2025.

At this point we are at adjournment. I would ask: is there a member who would have a motion to adjourn? I see MLA Dyck's hand first. We'll let him do that. Moved by MLA Dyck that the November 3, 2025 meeting of the Standing Committee on Legislative Offices be adjourned. All those in favour? Any opposed? That motion is carried.

[The committee adjourned at 12:04 p.m.]

