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Special Standing Committee
on
Members' Services

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Special Standing Committee on Members' Services

Participant

Ministry of Treasury Board and Finance

Mark Day, Executive Director, Risk Management and Insurance

9:04 a.m.

Monday, September 26, 2016

[Mr. Wanner in the chair]

The Chair: Good morning. For starters, we should all turn our phones off. I'd like to call the meeting to order.

Before we get started with our business items, I'd ask that members and officials joining the committee at the table introduce themselves for the record. I would then call upon the members joining the meeting via teleconference to introduce themselves.

Ms Jabbour, if you'd like to start out.

Ms Jabbour: Hi. Debbie Jabbour, MLA, Peace River.

Mrs. Schreiner: Good morning. Kim Schreiner, MLA for Red Deer-North.

Ms Luff: Robyn Luff, MLA for Calgary-East.

Mr. Horne: Trevor Horne, MLA for Spruce Grove-St. Albert.

Mr. Piquette: Good morning. It's Colin Piquette, Athabasca-Sturgeon-Redwater.

Mr. S. Anderson: Shaye Anderson, MLA, Leduc-Beaumont.

Mrs. Sawchuk: Karen Sawchuk, committee clerk.

The Chair: Bob Wanner, MLA, Medicine Hat.

Mr. Reynolds: Rob Reynolds, Clerk.

Ms Dean: Shannon Dean, Law Clerk and director of House services.

Ms Scarlett: Cheryl Scarlett, director of human resources, information technology, and broadcast services.

Mr. Nixon: Jason Nixon, MLA for Rimbey-Rocky Mountain House-Sundre.

Mr. Cooper: Good morning. Nathan Cooper, the MLA for the outstanding constituency of Olds-Didsbury-Three Hills.

Mr. McIver: Ric McIver, MLA, Calgary-Hays.

Mrs. Alenius: Bev Alenius, Speaker's office.

Mr. Ellis: Scott Ellis, director of financial management and administrative services with the LAO.

The Chair: Thank you very much.

I understand we have some members on the phone lines. Mr. Clark, are you with us?

Mr. Clark: I am. Good morning. Greg Clark, MLA, Calgary-Elbow.

Mr. Fildebrandt: Derek Fildebrandt, Strathmore-Brooks.

The Chair: Anyone else on the line?

Hearing none, for the record I'll also advise that Mr. Anderson is substituting for Member Cortes-Vargas and Mr. Horne for Mr. Dang. Correct?

The meeting agenda and the other documents were posted to the committee's internal website for the members' information. If we require copies of these documents, please let the committee clerk know now. I would point out that I think there was a small addendum added to the site this morning. Is that correct, Karen?

Mrs. Sawchuk: That is correct, Mr. Speaker. We do have copies of the budget allocation document for agenda item 5(c).

The Chair: Before we go to the business at hand, the microphone consoles are operated by the *Hansard* staff. Please keep your mobile devices on silent and off the table – I've done that now – as these, I'm told, can interfere with the audiofeed. Audio of committee proceedings is streamed live on the Internet and recorded by *Alberta Hansard*. Audio access and meeting transcripts are obtained via the Legislative Assembly website.

The agenda. Are there any additions or changes to the agenda? If not, would a member move adoption of our meeting agenda, please? Mr. Cooper moves approval of the agenda for September 26. All in favour of the motion, say aye. Opposed? Agreed. The motion is carried.

We'll move on to the minutes from our last meeting. Are there any errors or omissions? These are the minutes from March 1, 2016. If not, is somebody prepared to move acceptance of the minutes from March 1? Mr. Nixon. All in favour, say aye. Opposed, say no. The motion is passed.

There are some outstanding business items that are on the agenda from, actually, prior to the 29th Assembly. This is the former members' benefit package past age 75. Members, prior to the 2015 election the Speaker's office was approached by the Alberta Association of Former MLAs respecting elements of the LAO benefits plan, which currently provides coverage to age 75 for former MLAs. Members should have a copy of a briefing note with respect to the issue, and we have Cheryl Scarlett, director of human resources, IT, and broadcast services, in attendance this morning to provide along with the Clerk an overview of the briefing document and to answer any questions the committee may have.

Mr. Clerk, would you like to start it out, and then to Cheryl.

9:10

Mr. Reynolds: Well, good morning. Thank you very much. I'm going to turn this over to Cheryl Scarlett. This has been an issue that's been discussed by Members' Services, as the Speaker indicated, or been up for consideration for a while in the sense that former members have been asking about this item. Cheryl had undertaken – well, the LAO undertook it, and Cheryl was kind enough to do it – some investigation with respect to the options that exist for former members with respect to benefit coverage after they leave.

So, Cheryl, if I may, Mr. Speaker. Thank you.

The Chair: Yeah. Please proceed, Cheryl.

Ms Scarlett: Thank you. Just touching on the briefing note that you all received, again, by way of background, Members' Services has approved in the past a provision whereby members, when they retire, can continue to participate in the MLA benefits package. The participation rules as they exist right now for the former members state that their coverage for life insurance terminates at age 70 and that the prescriptions, extended medical, and dental terminate at age 75. One of the questions being asked is: can that age 75 limit be extended upward, perhaps to age 80?

The other question being asked is with respect to out-of-country emergency travel coverage. Presently for members 70 to 75 there is a restriction in terms that coverage is only available to former members for 30 days at a time. The question being asked is: is there any way that that could be extended?

With that in mind, in the backgrounder note we have just restated in terms of the provisions of what we call the extended benefits option, EBO, for former members. We have provided some history in terms of that the initial decision to allow members, when they

retire, to continue to participate on the MLA plan was approved back in 1988. As you can see by the briefing note, there have been some modifications, changes to the participation rules over the years, which brings us, then, to page 3 in terms of some options for your consideration to address the two questions that are on the table right now in terms of, you know: is this something that we want to take a look at at this time?

Option 1 is the status quo. Option 2 would be your direction to go back and perhaps explore a supplemental retiree plan, be that stand-alone or perhaps through a partnership with another existing retiree plan to try to address the two questions on the table in terms of providing coverage past age 75 and perhaps some expanded out-of-Canada travel coverage. However, option 2 is on the premise that there would be no additional risk or potential liability as a result of claims to the LAO, but the LAO would continue to provide the administrative support as we already are in terms of the former members. Option 3 would be to do something over and above, that we'd negotiate and look at extending the coverage. However, there would be more risk and potential liability as a result of claims to the LAO. In the document there is a recommendation that there be some consideration in terms of perhaps option 2 at this time.

I'll leave it at that for questions.

The Chair: Mrs. Schreiner.

Mrs. Schreiner: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I appreciate the information laid out for us by the LAO. Regarding the three options, can someone explain to us in more detail the differences between option 1 and option 2?

Ms Scarlett: Option 1 is the status quo, so there would be no change to the coverage that the former members enjoy right now, meaning that they can stay on the plan up to the age of 75 and that the out-of-country emergency travel would remain as is.

Option 2, presented for your consideration and direction if you were to choose to do so, is that we explore an additional, supplementary plan. It is expected that that would provide some coverage to those members only between the ages of 75 and 80 so that their coverage would not stop at age 75. However, just in terms of cost containment both for the members in terms of the premium and to ensure that there was no additional liability or cost to the LAO, it's expected that what I'll call a supplementary retiree plan for that group more than likely would need to be designed so that it were perhaps of lesser benefit to ensure the cost containment. But it would provide something to them in that continuation between 75 and 80 and also, on the same premise, perhaps be able to provide them with an option to take and buy additional out-of-country emergency travel for periods longer than 30 days.

The Chair: Kim.

Mrs. Schreiner: Thank you. Option 2 seems to indicate that there would be limited budgetary implications given the fact that the LAO is already responsible for administering parts of the benefits program for past members. Is this correct?

Ms Scarlett: That is the intent in which option 2 was presented, yes.

Mrs. Schreiner: All right.

The Chair: One more supplementary.

Mrs. Schreiner: Thank you. With option 2, this is giving the former members the opportunity to potentially negotiate an option with no cost or liability increase to the LAO. But who would

approve this final agreement, and would this negotiated option be brought again before this committee?

Ms Scarlett: It would be my assumption that this would be coming back to this committee, yes.

Mrs. Schreiner: Thank you.

The Chair: Thank you.

Mr. McIver.

Mr. McIver: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Now, is it in any way normal for an employer to provide these types of benefits, out in the private sector or any place else in the world other than the Legislative Assembly, for their retired employees?

Ms Scarlett: Yes. There are plans. We are aware of plans by other employers to do so. As a matter of fact, right now in the public service of Alberta, when employees retire and commence drawing their pension, they are eligible, should they choose to, to continue or set up benefits through the Alberta Retired Teachers' Association, through the ARTA plan, so there are provisions in place for public servants of Alberta when they retire. I am familiar with other organizations, and within other Legislatures throughout Canada there are a couple as well that have arrangements of sorts for coverage of their former members.

Mr. McIver: That was helpful. Thank you.

Also, if I might continue, I've got a couple more questions, please, Mr. Speaker.

The Chair: Sure.

Mr. McIver: Okay. When you were talking – and I was trying to listen carefully – I think I recall you saying two or three times that with option 3 there is additional risk to the LAO if there are claims put in, that there could be a lot of additional costs. I didn't hear you mention, unless I missed it, and that's why I want to make sure I heard it: what are the risks to the Legislative Assembly with option 2 of having additional costs that would essentially be absorbed by the taxpayer at the end of the day?

Ms Scarlett: The intent of the proposal of option 2 is to try to work with our service providers or, potentially, another retiree plan so that there would be no additional risk or additional cost to LAO relative to the experience.

Mr. McIver: All right. What about staffing? Would we have to have additional staffing in the LAO, which, of course, would be a cost to the taxpayers, if we went with option 2?

Ms Scarlett: No. Presently human resources on behalf of the LAO administers for the eligible former members on the plan, and it's our proposal that we'd continue to do that with no additional request for staff.

9:20

Mr. McIver: Would it be fair for me to say that option 2 would be additional potential benefits for retired members but out of their own pocket and not out of the taxpayer's pocket? Would that be a fair statement, or am I wrong on that in some way?

Ms Scarlett: Correct. That's the intent of the proposal.

Mr. McIver: Okay. Then that seems like a reasonable thing to consider.

The Chair: Mr. Piquette.

Mr. Piquette: Yeah. Just a follow-up to Mr. McIver's questions. For the administrative costs, is there even, like, sort of a ballpark? Like, how many additional hours would be involved, let's say, in administering this program on a weekly basis or a monthly basis? Would this be just a regular part of the existing staff's duties?

Ms Scarlett: In terms of providing the administrative support to our former members who are eligible to be on the plan, this is part of the service that human resource services provides. As you saw in the background information, we provided numbers in terms of the number of participants in the plan right now. Obviously, that's going to change as we go election to election and as those members get to that age where they are no longer eligible to participate or may choose that they don't want to participate in our plan anymore. We do not see this as an issue. Option 2 is not being stated in terms of any additional hours per se. It's part of the service that we provide, and we feel comfortable that we can continue to do so.

Mr. Piquette: Okay. Well, in that case, I would think that option 2 would at least be acceptable to myself if there were no extra costs involved. Thanks for that.

The Chair: Are there any other questions?

Is someone prepared to move a motion? Mr. McIver.

Mr. McIver: Yes. Thanks, Chair. I would say, based on the answers I got, that there will be no additional cost to the taxpayers and it's something that the retired members want and also bearing in mind that it's not unique, as was explained by the administration, I would be prepared to move the recommendation of option 2.

The Chair: For the record, for clarity maybe we can get Karen to just read it, the intent of what's been stated.

Mrs. Sawchuk: Thank you. Moved by Mr. McIver that the Special Standing Committee on Members' Services direct LAO human resources to explore a supplemental retiree plan to provide options for coverage past 75 years and expanded out-of-country travel coverage that would operate at no additional cost to the LAO.

The Chair: Having heard the motion, all in favour, please say aye. Those opposed, say no. The motion is carried.

Mrs. Sawchuk: On the phones.

The Chair: Oh, excuse me. Mr. Fildebrandt, are you with us?

Mr. Fildebrandt: If it's a unanimous vote, just move on with it unless I pipe up and say otherwise, Mr. Speaker.

The Chair: Was that a yes?

Mr. Fildebrandt: It's a yes.

The Chair: Thank you.

Therefore, it is unanimous.

We're now moving to 4(b), modernization of Members' Services Committee orders. Mr. Clerk.

Mr. Reynolds: Well, thank you, Mr. Chair. This is something that's been ongoing. I must say that I didn't complete it when I was Law Clerk, but Shannon Dean has, which is tremendous. Basically, it's just a cleanup of the Members' Services orders, and we've been waiting for direction from Members' Services to go ahead with it.

Some of the orders haven't been changed in a while, which is why they have out-of-date language. When the specific orders are amended, we tend to go in and clean it up, sort of like a visit to your dentist. Shannon can go on about the specific examples of what we've done, and it's a little more than just cleaning up the gender-neutral language.

Perhaps, Mr. Speaker, Shannon can carry on with this.

The Chair: Shannon.

Ms Dean: Sure. I would just add that we've changed references with respect to "his" and "he" to more gender-neutral language simply referring to "members." We've updated out-of-date language such as "secretarial," and there was also a Treasury Board directive dealing with travel and meals that needed to be updated.

In our review we noticed that the group life insurance order and group plans order require more substantive changes, and we will come back to the committee with a revised amending order for consideration at a later date.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Chair: Mr. Cooper.

Mr. Cooper: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I don't know why this has taken so many years, but in a desire to execute the good work, I'd like to propose a motion that we accept the changes to the Members' Services . . .

The Chair: Nathan, if you could just hold that motion for a minute. There are a couple more questions. I'll come back to you.

Mr. Cooper: Oh. I was hoping we could go fast.

The Chair: Someone else had a question. Is that right?

Mr. Horne: I'm certainly encouraged by Mr. Cooper's enthusiasm to support this. I just wanted to take a moment to thank Ms Dean for all of the work she's put into this. I'm proud that as a caucus we're committed to gender equality and inclusivity, and I know it's something that I strive to do in my own practice, especially around the office. I really work towards that. Updating the MSC orders to be more gender neutral is something that I sincerely hope all members can support. It sounds like at least Mr. Cooper is all for that.

The Chair: Mr. McIver.

Mr. McIver: Thanks, Mr. Speaker. I would just say that this sounds like it's a fairly easy thing to do, but the English language, being the wonderful vehicle that it is for communication, sometimes can lend itself to interpretations that are unexpected. While I'm not against this – I'm all for it – are we only making specific changes as outlined in the piece of paper in front of us? It occurs to me that this is the direction to make the same changes across a whole, broad range of legislation or regulations beyond this. Or are the changes limited to exactly what's on the paper here?

Ms Dean: Mr. Chair, the proposed changes are as outlined in the draft order . . .

Mr. McIver: Okay. Perfect, then.

Ms Dean: . . . and they are limited to just the Members' Services Committee orders.

Mr. McIver: Then the unexpected changes of meaning that I feared – there's no chance of that because every single one is here, and

they've all been vetted. Perfect. That's a good reason for me to support this.

Thank you.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. McIver. I don't like surprises either. Now Mr. Cooper.

Mr. Cooper: So moved.

The Chair: Again, Karen if you could just read for sake of clarity the proposed motion – Mr. Cooper, I hope you agree with this wording – so we keep it for the record.

Mrs. Sawchuk: Moved by Mr. Cooper that the Special Standing Committee on Members' Services approve the proposed revised Members' Services modernization of language amendment order (No. 1).

Mr. Cooper: I couldn't have said it better.

The Chair: You sounded wonderful.

All in favour, please say aye. Those opposed, please say no. The motion is carried.

Ah, the second time. Mr. Fildebrandt.

Mr. Fildebrandt: In favour.

The Chair: Yes. Thank you.

I'm hopeful that with this we might well be out of here very early in the day. What a wonderful idea. Before we go to new business, I know that that's a desire that all of us share, so we'll move ahead.

I believe that we are dealing with new business now: coverage for members, risk management and insurance. Mr. Clerk, I think we have a guest with us today.

Mr. Reynolds: Yes. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd just like to say a word. This is something that I was really hoping could occur, a discussion or an explanation of coverages that are available to members, because I've been here a few years and it's not always been something that members knew. There was a bit of an incident in and around 2000, when members said that it wasn't quite clear what coverages they had. I think it's very important for members to know this and to be able to operate on the basis of informed choice with respect to their activities, in a sense.

The person who administers the risk management insurance system for the province of Alberta is Mr. Mark Day, who's been in risk management – and I'm sorry, Mark. I didn't check for how many years, but you can tell us. He's very accomplished. Risk management is a division within Alberta Treasury Board and Finance, but they've administered the MLA coverage program for a number of years.

In any event, I'm very pleased that he was able to join us today, and without further ado, Mr. Speaker, if I may turn it over to Mark Day.

9:30

The Chair: Welcome, Mr. Day.

Just for the sake of the committee as well, I hope that we might have presentations like this as information items for MLAs on an ongoing basis because there's much to be learned.

We'll turn the floor to you, Mr. Day. Welcome.

Mr. Day: Thank you very much. I'm very happy to be here. To answer Rob's question, I'm proud to say that I've worked for the government for over 25 years. It's been a very rewarding career, so I'm happy to be here.

My name is Mark Day. I'm the executive director of the risk management and insurance division. That's a division of the Treasury Board and Finance ministry. Our authority is found under the Financial Administration Act and associated Treasury Board regulations. We provide services to government departments, most provincial corporations, all provincial committees, legislative officers, the Legislative Assembly Office, and to members. We also are responsible for investigating and resolving losses and claims that are covered under the risk management insurance program. Losses are financed primarily through self-insurance provided by a regulated fund called the Alberta risk management fund.

Member participation in the risk management program is co-ordinated through the Legislative Assembly Office. Insurance coverage is provided for property losses at constituency offices. Members are also covered when renting vehicles in the course of carrying out members' duties. Members are also entitled to liability coverage related to the performance of their duties as members pursuant to Members' Services Committee orders. Liability insurance is provided for constituency offices and all activities of members such as community events, participation in local parades, and liabilities associated with member activities. The liability coverage includes coverage for defamation claims made against a member. Coverage and terms and conditions are set out in a schedule to the risk management fund regulations, which, as I mentioned, are Treasury Board regulations.

Occasionally members can be named in legal actions as defendants. When this occurs and if the member wishes to use the RMI coverage, RMI will work with the member and provide a defence for these actions where coverage falls under the terms and conditions of the risk management fund. In some cases you will require certificates of insurance to indicate that the member has liability insurance, and in those cases we will provide that evidence of insurance for you.

I want to talk a little bit about the liability coverage. The liability coverage is set out in the schedule to the regulation and was based on what would typically be insured under a basic liability policy that was available around 1985. Since that time no substantive changes to the scope of coverage have been made. This means that coverage is limited to bodily injury claims, property damage claims, and personal injury claims, which include defamation allegations. As a member you can be sued for defamation, but you may also be sued for other allegations, sometimes frivolous and sometimes from self-represented litigants. We have seen instances where suits have been brought by freemen on the land or sovereign citizens. In these cases there may not be allegations involving bodily injury or personal injury, and they may not even seek money as damages. Unfortunately, when this happens, risk management is unable to respond to defend these claims on your behalf due to the limited coverage currently provided in the schedule.

Today I would like to propose that coverage for members be broadened so that the risk management fund may respond to manage these sorts of claims. There would not be any additional charge for this coverage and would bring members' coverage in line with that being provided to ministers, legislative officers, and senior employees of the province. We believe that having this coverage available to members is an improvement that allows risk management to respond quickly when allegations arise. This is important as there is limited time in which to respond to a statement of claim. All costs in defending these allegations would then be covered by risk management.

Now, should the Members' Services Committee decide to proceed with this broadened coverage, risk management will work with the Legislative Assembly Office to finalize the specific wording to be incorporated in the new schedule to our regulations. The

new schedule would then be presented to Treasury Board for approval.

At this point I'm not looking for a decision from the Members' Services Committee today but will leave that with the committee and would be happy to answer any questions you may have.

The Chair: Yes. Thank you, Mr. Day. Your suggestions with respect to the future: I don't think the committee is in a position today to deal with that. We will take that under consideration and bring it back at a future date if there's a desire to do that.

Mr. McIver.

Mr. McIver: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Day, I'm going to go a little bit off topic, and I'm sure Mr. Speaker will rein me in, but what I'm going to ask about is pertinent, and it is definitely under the category of insurance coverage for members. I'm talking specifically about life insurance coverage for members. If a member passes away, how long should it take for the life insurance through the LAO to pay out?

Mr. Day: I'm unable to answer that question. We don't deal with the life insurance aspects.

Mr. McIver: Okay. Then specifically, whatever amount of time that is, no matter how little or how much, how much is that delayed if the member doesn't have a will?

The Chair: Mr. McIver, I'm not sure Mr. Day is in a position to answer that. I think that's more of a matter dealt with by our own LAO staff through HR.

Mr. Reynolds: Mr. Speaker, I was going to say that Mr. Day doesn't administer the life insurance applications for us.

Mr. McIver: Then I happily accept your admonishment, and I'll stop asking these questions.

Mr. Reynolds: It's okay.

The Chair: Mr. Piquette.

Mr. McIver: I offered up myself that I thought I might not have been asking the question of the right person, so you've confirmed that, and I'm happy to ask the question of a different person at a different time.

Mr. Piquette: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yeah. Just for Mr. McIver, I was formerly a life insurance agent, and offline I could maybe answer some of those questions for you.

Now, just on the risk management fund. I guess my first question is – like, in the little briefing we got online it says that coverage is primarily handled through the Alberta risk management fund. So if that's primary, I'm just wondering: what's secondary?

Mr. Day: We manage most of the claims. The government of Alberta has taken a position that it's better to finance all of your claims internally and take a long view, but there are certain catastrophic situations where risk management has bought additional commercial insurance in the regular insurance market.

Mr. Piquette: Are you referring to re-insurance, then?

Mr. Day: Typically it's not re-insurance. We use the services of an insurance broker to go to the primary insurance market.

We have two main policies. One is a layered property coverage policy, that will provide coverage for a loss of government assets. That coverage is currently with a limit of \$700 million and would

pay for the most expensive building that we cover under our program, which is the Calgary Courts Centre.

We also have excess liability insurance coverage for catastrophic liability claims made against the province or its agencies.

Mr. Piquette: What companies are these two policies with?

Mr. Day: The liability program is placed through Lloyd's of London as a single syndicate in Lloyd's of London. That's where the liability coverage is. The property coverage has got various layers. The primary layer, the first \$25 million of loss, is through Travellers Insurance, and then we have a series of about six other layers building the tower up to \$700 million, and that has probably seven or eight different insurance companies participating at different levels.

Mr. Piquette: Okay. How often do those policies go up for bid or review, like, through your broker? Is there, like, a standard . . .

Mr. Day: Yes. We do the annual review. Our liability program is a three-year program, and the other policies go up for a bid through our broker annually.

Mr. Piquette: Okay.

The Chair: Are there any other questions or comments from members?

Mr. Reynolds: Mr. Speaker.

The Chair: Yes.

Mr. Reynolds: Sorry. Could I just add a note here? To Mr. Piquette's question I was going to say something on a more basic level in terms of members understanding the coverage that's available for them. Of course, this is available to the thousands listening to this broadcast, including all members.

9:40

In any event, when you are sued, that's when insurance kicks in, okay? If a member receives a statement of claim that says, "You're being sued," you would go: "Oh, dear. What do I do?" You have a limited period in which to respond. Sometimes people get in touch with Parliamentary Counsel and say, "What do I do?", and we can advise them. Risk management will work with them to assist them.

There are a few things that you should know. It's when you're a defendant that insurance kicks in. Insurance doesn't work for you to be a plaintiff. This is another question that we get quite often, you know, hypothetically: I don't like maybe what someone has done or whatever. Can a member sue them? Well, yes, but it's not provided for by insurance. That's an important thing to remember.

The other thing that's important is that it has to be done in performing your duty as a member. There is specific wording in the coverage. I'm looking for Mark to nod here – yes; thank you – and some reassurance. My self-confidence is waning. In any event, that's important to know, and that's where members can rely on risk management and insurance.

Mark was, I think, just trying to bring the coverages for members up to a standard now. I'm sure that you've read about cases where courts are inundated with paper. What happens sometimes is that self-represented people don't necessarily use the right documents and can put a lot of documents before the court. The problem is that if you're sued or named in it, you have to respond to them or make appearances, which is very time consuming and expensive. There is a little gap in the coverage, and I think that Mark is trying to fix

that so that members can get the benefit if they're the subject of a frivolous or vexatious action.

Have I captured that correctly, Mark?

Mr. Day: Yes. You can be sued just by virtue of the office that you hold, and we see that sometimes. You haven't actually done anything in carrying out your official duties, but you can end up with your name on a statement of claim against you, particularly from people that are self-represented, which means they don't have their own counsel to properly craft these things. It will end up on your desk, and it will come over to our office. Our office is used to dealing with claims against the government, and we're able to take the necessary legal steps to immediately get it struck and put an end to that.

The problem with the existing schedule is that if there are no allegations that you've injured someone or damaged their property or, in the case of a personal injury, are subject to a defamation claim, if it's not any of those things, the restricted nature of the coverage for MLAs doesn't allow us to immediately step in and handle that claim on your behalf. It's just the nature of your business and what you can be a target of. Particularly we've seen this from freemen, sovereign citizens. We're unable to respond, so that means it needs to go back to the Legislative Assembly Office with appointment of counsel incurring some costs in order to strike that. It would be easier if we were able to deal with those claims on your behalf. That's the gap that we were referring to.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Day.

Mr. Cooper: Mr. Speaker, I'm just curious to know: why would we want to kick this down the road to another meeting? Why don't we just provide some guidance to bring a request for decision or whatever needs to happen so that we're not two meetings away and we're only one meeting away from closing the gap?

The Chair: That's clearly an option. We didn't have the information. I thought the committee might wish more background, but in the vein of which you're speaking to, if there are no questions, I was going to get at least a general sense from the committee about their desire to look at this matter. Or you can make it a motion as well, and staff would work with Mr. Day to come back with a specific recommendation.

Mr. Cooper: Postdiscussion or prediscussion I'm happy to make a motion of that nature that would direct staff to work with risk management to bring a recommendation to the committee to close gaps in coverage.

The Chair: Members, looking around the table, there seems to be some consensus on Mr. Cooper's motion. All in favour of the motion? Mr. Piquette, you had a point?

Mr. Piquette: Yes. I just want to be very clear here. This would be coming back to us rather than going directly to the Treasury Board after we had an idea of what changes are being contemplated.

Mr. Reynolds: Mr. Speaker, just in terms of process I think that it would, based on Mr. Cooper's motion, come back to us. This is one of those rare incidences where, actually, the Treasury Board does have some control over this portion that touches members' lives, so it would go back to Treasury Board for a final decision on the regulation. You know, we just want this to be very open, very transparent, and for you to know what changes are being made, so it would come back here and then go to Treasury Board, if I've captured Mr. Cooper's intent correctly.

The Chair: Colin.

Mr. Piquette: Yeah. I can understand that. I mean, I just wouldn't mind if we are advising that we have some – we haven't seen in the wording what we're covered for. I have a sort of vague idea of what we're extending. I think this obviously needs to be reviewed. This is not to delay the process, but if we are advising – I'm not sure. It's a pretty broad bit of advice we're giving.

The Chair: Just to be clear, it is my understanding that the motion would be that – by the way, I wasn't aware that we needed in this particular instance to go to the Treasury Board, but the process as I see it is: staff will prepare, consult with Mr. Day on the various options and the specific recommendations; that plan would come back here at a future meeting; you then as a committee decide whether or not you wish to pursue it; and then it would proceed to the Treasury Board if there's a positive recommendation on that for implementation. I guess they have a degree of review as well, but it won't go there until there's an agreement by Members' Services. Is there consensus and agreement on that? That's the intent, Colin.

Karen, could you try to make sure Mr. Cooper's recommendation – can you read it back?

Mrs. Sawchuk: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I might have missed something. Moved by Mr. Cooper that the Special Standing Committee on Members' Services direct LAO staff to work with risk management and insurance to update the coverage provided under the plan and submit to the committee for review at a future meeting.

Mr. Cooper: Perfect.

The Chair: Hearing the motion, is there agreement? Please say aye. Mr. Fildebrandt, did you raise your hand?

Mr. Fildebrandt: My hand is high in the air. Aye.

The Chair: All right. Excellent.

Anyone opposed? The motion is carried unanimously. Thank you, everyone.

Thank you, Mr. Day. I'm sure you'll be working with our staff to identify the options and come back at a future date.

Mr. Day: Happy to do that.

The Chair: Thank you.

Again, another information item for you to deal with. I'm really pleased to have this opportunity to have this presentation. It's one of those events in the new life that we all have. This is a good-news story. Our Legislature Library staff has been working for many, many years to bring forward a comprehensive online resource detailing the legislative service history of the 905 individuals who have served as members of this Assembly since 1905. Our library staff, who are those, what I call, silent soldiers working in that wonderful room in the Legislature, hope to launch an exciting initiative prior to the start of this fall sitting. I think the details you will see soon.

Mr. Clerk, I think we have our Librarian here, Val Footz, who will show us through the presentation, but do you have any opening comments?

9:50

Mr. Reynolds: Just briefly, I want to say that this project, which Val Footz is going to explain, is the result of a tremendous amount of work by the Legislative Assembly Office staff over the years to compile a study, a presentation on the lives of all the members who

have served in the Alberta Legislative Assembly since 1905, as you said. I may be prejudiced, but I think it's a remarkable accomplishment. I'll let members draw their own conclusions, Mr. Speaker.

The Chair: Thank you.

Ms Footz, welcome. Please proceed.

Ms Footz: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I will just echo those comments, too, that a number of staff over the years have contributed to this. I think you've read the briefing note if you've had a chance. I will try and hit the highlights. I will say, though, that I will be doing a demonstration live in the breakout room over lunch. I didn't want to spend too much of your meeting time here. I think you will find that this is something that will be used by yourselves and your caucus and members of the public. In response to a number of requests – sorry about that. Well, you should be seeing a PowerPoint.

The Chair: I'm seeing a fine picture of the Legislature so far.

Ms Footz: It's lovely. IT staff? Okay. Well, you have slides in your package.

The Chair: Val, I have a suggestion. Could we take a two-minute recess and give you the tech opportunity, and we'll immediately come back?

Ms Footz: That sounds great. Thank you. This does not bode well.

The Chair: Okay. Two minutes.

[The committee adjourned from 9:52 a.m. to 9:56 a.m.]

The Chair: Houston, we have contact.

Ms Footz: Okay. I think we're back and that the PowerPoint is working. I took the opportunity just to distribute copies of the end product, but you will sort of see through the demo that there are a couple of different parts to this. I will e-mail Mr. Fildebrandt his. I also didn't get the substitutions, so I apologize for that.

Anyhow, as we were saying, the library staff worked diligently over the years to basically get detailed legislative service records into this database. All of the information that will be posted is public. It's just compiled in a different way so that you can see sort of a snapshot of what each member has participated in over the years in terms of legislative committees and so on. The most difficult part was not the current members. It was the historical members, and that was the part that was actually missing from the Legislative Assembly website.

We have dealt with everybody consistently and methodically. For the first time Albertans will have access to a comprehensive, authoritative source for the legislative service of current and former members. This is something that library staff tracks anyhow. It is just making it more available for Albertans.

The idea has been around for a number of years, as the Clerk has mentioned, but it really took hold after the centennials of the province and of the Legislative Assembly in 2005 and 2006. We went back to primary sources, and you will see with a couple of the examples in the PowerPoint that rather than have to reinvent the wheel every time or confirm a piece of information over time, over and over again, we've done it once, and now it's up there and it's available, or it will be shortly.

We previously relied on historical resources like the *Canadian Parliamentary Guide*, but errors creep in. Unfortunately, sometimes those errors were repeated and referred to by members of the public, and there was no authoritative source, so by going through

and checking everything, we have resolved those errors, and we have put forward what is the accurate record that we've been able to find.

Some of the issues that we've encountered are, like, names. The example that I've provided here is John P. Marcellus. When we went back to verify his age, we found that his surname was actually spelled differently on his birth certificate prior to moving to Alberta when he became a member. Secondly, again, we are trying to pinpoint dates as much as possible. John Boyle was appointed Attorney General in the *Alberta Gazette* on August 23, 1918, but he was actually not sworn in as a minister until the 24th. In our records we have it as the 24th because that's when he took his oath.

I mentioned previously the *Canadian Parliamentary Guide*. There was a by-election that was reported as being held on February 14, 1971, but it was really 1972. So things like that, again, small details, but we wanted to have one accurate place instead of out there on the Internet under Wikipedia and so on.

Portfolios. This was an interesting example that we came across. There was a minister of utilities and telephones in Alberta's history, but in 1982-83, depending on when you look at it, it was actually the minister of utilities and telecommunications, but the change in the legislation didn't take place until six months after the minister was sworn in. Again, a little detail, but it's for accuracy.

We came across a couple of other things. If you go into the breakout room with me afterwards, we found out a lot of things in terms of from 1909 until 1926, if a member was appointed to Executive Council, then the member went back to the electorate to have that confirmed, so there were a lot of by-elections in that period. We thought it was strange that a number of them showed up, but that's the reason why. It was the legislation.

Also, for decades candidates could run in more than one constituency, so there was actually one member in history that served two constituencies at one time. That was in 1913. It was Charles Cross, and he was for Edmonton and Edson. Premier Sifton in 1913 ran in – I'm trying to remember – Vermilion and Macleod, and he won in one and lost in the other. Those are the two instances. Again, when you come across something like that, you think: "Really? Is that true?" It was, but again we had to resolve that so that there is an accurate place for that.

I mentioned before having to go back to birth records, and the reason why we did that – all of you very kindly filled out a member biographical form for us in the library – was so that we could calculate things like the average age by Legislature and so on. So we have more information, which is why it took us a little bit longer. We wanted to make sure we had accurate records for all members, but we are not making all of that public, of course. That is for collective purposes, so that we could say that the average age of a certain Legislature was greater or smaller than for another Legislature. We have more information, and this is just what is public already. We're just sort of massaging it in a different way. By the way, the 29th Legislature is the seventh youngest in Alberta's history – I'll just throw that in – at 45.8.

Mr. Cooper: What was the youngest?

Ms Footz: The youngest? I happen to have that. The youngest was the Second Legislature, which was from 1909 to 1913, and they were at 42. We won't talk about the most senior.

There was some information that was not gathered, though, because again it was just going to be too difficult to do. So we do not have a comprehensive list of government committee memberships. This is strictly legislative committees. That was our focus.

The Legislative Assembly site will have both a biography for current members and the profile for all members. That's the big difference. Formerly, former members were not represented on the site. Now they will be after this launch. The biographies will continue. That's the more narrative style that you worked on with communications. They draft that, and they put it up. They have a set style that they follow. This profile: it's strictly factual and tabular. You can sort of see by what I handed out. That is the PDF output of the database. There are bits that are more online and more dynamic. You can choose certain parts to put in and out. You can print certain things. But now, again, when you are going to speak to somebody or your staff need to provide more information about you, they can provide this profile as well as your biography, for instance.

So that is kind of it in a nutshell. It is a very cool little application that I wanted to also thank the support of IT for. You can read in the briefing that they had a lot of input in terms of how best to structure this data, on which platform, and so on.

I think that is all that I wanted to show you at this moment, but again I'm happy to talk to anybody or answer any questions. I hope you get a chance over lunch to see the demo.

10:05

The Chair: Thank you, Val. I need to clear my biases at the outset. My daughter is a librarian, so I maybe have the good fortune of being a little more informed about this.

The second point I would make, folks, is that, again, we have some very dedicated staff, very highly skilled professionals who are here, not only within our LAO but throughout the public service, that are serving the citizens of this province every day. It's really a privilege to be associated with them.

Nathan, you had a question.

Mr. Cooper: Just a couple of quick questions for you, Val. Will the questions be searchable? Like, could you ask: who is the longest serving member? Is it searchable by years of service or anything like that?

Ms Footz: To some degree, but generally you would still come to the library with that. It's at our back end that we can put that stuff together for you.

Mr. Cooper: Okay. This is just a total side note since you're here; I was actually going to send you an e-mail this morning. Do you know how many former members are living? Is that the kind of question you'd be able to take a guess at?

Ms Footz: I don't know offhand, but we would have that.

Mr. Cooper: You would have that? Okay.

The Chair: Mr. Fildebrandt is with us. To Mr. Cooper's question, I understand that there's going to be a special category on the best beard that exists between Mr. Anderson and Mr. Fildebrandt.

Mr. Cooper: We all know Mr. Anderson is going to win that.

The Chair: Are there any other questions? I would urge you all at the break to take a few moments and sit with Val and look at that.

Greg, are you back with us?

Mr. Clark: I am indeed. Apologies.

The Chair: Well, again, I simply wanted the committee to be aware of services and projects that are taking place by the LAO. Thank

you, Val. I look forward to seeing the full package in the next several weeks.

Ms Footz: Great. Thank you very much. Thank you for your time.

The Chair: We would now go to item 5(c), Electoral Boundaries Commission. As members are aware, the Electoral Boundaries Commission Amendment Act, 2016, was passed during the spring sitting, with a new commission having to be appointed by October 31 of this year. As indicated in your briefing note, there are some financial implications of this legislative change. I do want to point out to the committee before we go any further: do all the members have the attached budget allocations document? If not, a paper copy is available. I'm assuming that everybody has that information.

We do have a guest with us. Mr. Resler, the Chief Electoral Officer, is with us as well as Mr. Ellis, our director of financial management and administrative services. They will go briefly over the background to this particular matter.

Mr. Clerk, again, opening comments? No?

Mr. Reynolds: Not really. Thank you very much. I just want to say that Mr. Resler was very available to come down and meet with the committee and changed his schedule around. I want to thank him for that.

Thank you.

Mr. Resler: Good morning, and thank you for the opportunity to speak with you on the budget for the Electoral Boundaries Commission. If the committee could refer to their budget spreadsheet, the budget provided to you is broken down into two budget cycles, the current cycle, being the 2016-17 year, and next year's, the 2017-18 budget. As you're aware, the 2016-17 budget process occurred before Bill 7 was passed. As a result, we need to request a supplementary budget for the commission for funding in the current year. The total budget for the commission is estimated at \$2,098,000, and the supplementary request being made today is for \$1,450,000, as detailed in the 2016-17 column. The 2017-18 budget will be incorporated within the total budget estimate for the Legislative Assembly Office and will be presented to the Members' Services Committee later this fall.

The 2016-17 budget is based on prior commissions, so we look at the prior commissions and estimate the budget that is presented to you. It does not include the base salaries of staff from the Legislative Assembly and Elections Alberta that assist in supporting the commission. We cover those costs in our respective budgets. Examples of the work that our offices provide from the LAO include *Hansard* services; administrative supports, so the use of a committee clerk; financial and HR support, so accounts payable, payroll; and communication assistance. Elections Alberta will provide two mapping staff, office and meeting space, administrative support services, and support from either myself or the Deputy Chief Electoral Officer. Alberta Finance also provides assistance through their statistics branch and the use of census Canada data.

Once the commission is appointed, we'll sit down with the commission members and finalize the activities that will occur. There are five commission members. Their compensation is based on the corporate human resources schedule of fees for board members. The exception will be the chair. If the chair is a sitting judge, their rate of pay is based on his or her current salary. Administrative support staff are included in the budget for the one-year period. When we look at travel costs, they relate to holding public hearings across the province and the related costs in transporting the commission staff plus support staff. In the last commission there were 16 different locations across the province that were visited during the two rounds of public hearings.

There are two types of advertising, one being a householder that is mailed to every resident explaining the role of the commission and how the public can engage, and then this is followed by advertising in newspapers and social media notices announcing the times and locations of those public hearings.

Other labour and services expenses include additional GIS mapping staff, legal services, a report writer, commission per diems, printing of maps, and the interim and final reports.

Again, we're requesting the Members' Services Committee approve supplementary funding for the 2016-17 fiscal year for the Electoral Boundaries Commission in the amount of \$1,450,000.

That's my presentation. If Scott has anything further to add?

The Chair: Thank you.

Scott, do you have any additional comments you'd like to make?

Mr. Ellis: No, I don't.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Resler.

To the committee: questions? Mr. McIver, I'm told, was here first.

Mr. McIver: Thanks, Mr. Speaker. Yeah, I looked at the budget here. I guess that half a million dollars in advertising to get to 4.3 million Albertans at their homes probably is reasonable. In fact, I looked at the whole thing, but here's where I have questions. I'm sure you'll have a good explanation, and I would be grateful for that explanation.

When I look at salaries of \$150,000, that's just for the end of this year, so that's six months-ish, maybe even a little bit more. I don't know what that adds up to: four, five, six staff? With other labour and services, \$215,000, we're looking at \$375,000, roughly, in labour and salary. I don't know. I mean, that's eight or 10 people. Here's where the disconnect is for me, and I'm hoping you can reconnect it. Office equipment rental and purchase for \$80,000 plus computer equipment for \$54,000: you're looking at \$130,000 to have office equipment for eight people or 10 people. I know it's not a big amount of money, but it doesn't sound like it connects for me. So maybe you could help me out with that, please.

10:15

Mr. Resler: Absolutely. When we look at the manpower – and, as I said, this is based on prior commissions. We don't know who's being appointed as commission members right now. The main component on the salary was the salary of the chair – last time that was a sitting judge – so the commission covers the salary of the person as they act in the capacity of the chair instead of Alberta Justice paying for that salary. So that was the primary component for salary, that one person.

When you look at office equipment rental – and you mentioned computer equipment – office computer rental is the audiovisual for all the hearings. We hire a company to do the audiovisual for all the hearings across the province, and that is strictly that cost. That's your sound system and everything.

Mr. McIver: Okay.

Mr. Resler: And as far as the computer items, two of the items – we're looking to purchase new plotters for the maps, two new map plotters. Right now that is estimated at \$27,000 per plotter, but we have been testing those out, and they're going to be coming in at a lower cost.

Mr. McIver: Okay. Well, that was an explanation I wasn't anticipating, and it almost makes sense or seems to make sense. Thank you. I appreciate that very much. Map plotters. Computer

equipment is actually map plotters, and office equipment is actually audiovisual for the meetings all around Alberta.

Mr. Resler: Exactly. Yes.

Mr. McIver: All right. I could nitpick you about whether you should rent it or buy this stuff and travel with it, but I don't think that's – this is the committee. I think that when the committee is going around, they will make that decision, hopefully, in the best interests of Albertans when they do.

Okay. That was a great explanation, much better than what I came up with myself. Thank you.

The Chair: Thank you.

Ms Luff.

Ms Luff: Thanks. Thanks very much for being here today. I appreciate it. I think, you know, we can all agree that this is something that needs to be done. It was agreed on unanimously in the House, so given that context I think we all know that this is happening and needs to be approved. But I just have some questions, I guess, with regard to – you said that this is based on previous commissions that happened, but from what I understand, the previous commission cost was \$1.2 million over two fiscal years . . .

Mr. Resler: Yes.

Ms Luff: . . . so the same fiscal. That seems to me to be substantially higher than previously. I know that it has been some years, so I'm just wondering if perhaps you could outline what you see the additional costs being between the last commission and this one.

Mr. Resler: Thank you. It is a significant increase, and it's an increase that we also saw when preparing the budget and the actuals for the last provincial general election. Obviously, the election was only over a four-year period; this is an almost eight-year period.

Primarily, the biggest jump – our postage doubled in cost. When you do a mail-out, it's 1.9 million residents that you're mailing to, so it adds up quickly. Advertising is by far the biggest increase, and we're looking at \$400,000 in advertising. That's, you know, the mail-out to the householders, 1.9 million, plus the cost of advertising in the local newspapers and on social media.

We used to use the government aircraft. Now we have to charter the air services, so that's almost \$100,000 right there.

As far as the board chair's salary, it's an increase. Depending on the person, that could be a savings there on who's appointed.

Ms Luff: Okay. I think that answers my question. I was just somewhat – it wasn't an answer that could be decided just by inflation. Like, just based on inflation, it would be about an extra \$100,000, but if postage costs have doubled, that seems to make sense to me. And then you just said advertising, which I did sort of flag as being the most expensive thing on here.

Mr. Resler: Yes, it is.

Ms Luff: So would you say that other advertising costs have increased as well, or is it mainly, like, the newspapers and social . . .

Mr. Resler: Newspapers have gone up, like, in the last eight years.

Ms Luff: Was there social media eight years ago?

Mr. Resler: No, there wasn't.

Ms Luff: Okay.

Mr. Resler: So that's a new component that's in there. The advertising figures: those are based on the last provincial general election, so what we experienced in the election we've applied in the budget here.

Ms Luff: Thank you.

The Chair: Mr. Cooper.

Mr. Cooper: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you. So nice to see you. I know it's been a couple of days. I'm hoping we can do this again next Monday. I bet you're not hoping.

The question that I have for you: in our briefing note it spoke of the last Electoral Boundaries Commission requesting a total operating budget of \$1.2 million. Do you know: was \$1.2 million the actual that was spent, or was that what they requested? I'm mostly curious to know how one would track down the line items from the previous commission. I think that your answers have been more than enough, but I'm just a bit curious if it would be possible to see that. It's not going to affect the outcome, I don't think, of the decision today, but I would like to have some additional information if possible on that.

The Chair: Mr. Ellis.

Mr. Ellis: Yeah. The original budget for both fiscal periods back in 2009 and 2011: the actual number was rounded up in the briefing note to \$1.2 million, but the actual number is \$1,186,000. The actual expenditures over that same period of time were \$1,032,299, fairly close to what was budgeted at that particular point in time.

Mr. Cooper: So they requested approximately \$1.2 million and spent approximately \$1.1 million is what I hear you saying.

Mr. Ellis: Yeah.

Mr. Cooper: Okay. That's fine, then.

Then the only other question I had was on the schedule, what commissioners will be paid. There are multiple parts of that schedule. Is it part A or part B, and how would one actually identify what the compensation is?

The Chair: Shannon.

Ms Dean: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. You're talking about commission members' pay. Is that correct, Mr. Cooper?

Mr. Cooper: Correct.

Ms Dean: That's set by an order in council.

Mr. Cooper: Okay.

Mr. Resler: Is it an order in council, not the CHR program or . . .

Ms Dean: If we were to go by past practice, it was the committee remuneration order the last time a commission was struck. But, again, it would be an order in council that sets that pay, so we don't know exactly what that would be.

The Chair: Are there any other questions or comments for Mr. Resler or Mr. Ellis?

Is the committee prepared to make a motion? We do have a suggested motion. If it's agreeable, I'll share that with you.

Mr. Clark: Mr. Speaker, I'd just like to be on the list. Very briefly, if I may.

The Chair: Yes. Thank you, Greg. Please proceed.

Mr. Clark: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I will be brief, recognizing that I'm not a voting member of the committee but a member in good standing. I have to be on the record on this. As I've sat and listened, having just completed the Special Ethics and Accountability Committee, I just want to say that although not a voting member but certainly someone with a strong interest in democracy in this province, I feel that it is absolutely appropriate for the boundaries commission to spend the budget that has been discussed here today because, frankly, these things are very important, take some time, take some financial, human, and technological resources to execute.

I just think that it's important to outline the differences between budgets. We're looking here at, as I understand it, in the neighbourhood of \$2 million for this commission compared to the \$156,000 spent for the entirety of the Select Special Ethics and Accountability Committee, which certainly constrained our ability to travel the province, which we did not do, and truly gather input from Albertans. I think that may have helped that process along.

I recognize that these are different committees, but I just wanted to be on the record highlighting the differences between those two and enthusiastically, although not in a voting way, supporting the work of the boundaries commission. I would hope that other committees that address core democratic institutions are afforded similar resources.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

10:25

The Chair: Thank you.

Mr. Fildebrandt, I didn't ask you before. Any comments?

Mr. Fildebrandt: Nothing further to add, Mr. Speaker.

The Chair: Thank you.

If the committee is prepared, I would maybe ask that Karen read into the record the proposed suggestion for the wording.

Mrs. Sawchuk: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The suggested draft motion is that

the Special Standing Committee on Members' Services approve the request for supplemental funding for the 2016-2017 fiscal year in the amount of \$1.45 million to cover costs related to the operations of the Electoral Boundaries Commission and that the Speaker on behalf of the committee forward the request to the President of Treasury Board and Minister of Finance.

The Chair: Is there a member who is prepared to move that? Mr. McIver.

Mr. McIver: I have a question, one question.

The Chair: A question first.

Mr. McIver: Perhaps I should have asked it before, but now you got me.

On travel: how many locations within Alberta do you expect the commission will travel to while consulting with Albertans?

Mr. Resler: For the last commission there were 16 locations across Alberta during the two hearings. We've budgeted for 16 in the first round and four in the supplementary, the second round of hearings. It was a different number last commission, but that's part of the discussion that'll take place between the commission members, what that schedule will be.

Mr. McIver: Thank you.

Mr. Resler: Yeah. You're welcome.

The Chair: Again, is there someone prepared to move the suggested motion? Ms Luff. Do we need the motion read again? All in favour of the motion, please say aye. Anyone opposed? The motion is carried unanimously. Thank you very much.

Thank you, Mr. Resler, for being here.

Mr. Resler: Thank you.

The Chair: We'll just move on the agenda to 5(d), workplace issues. You should have received in your policies the employee respectful workplace policy, which is managed by the LAO. I think the Clerk and Ms Scarlett will speak to the issue and quickly walk us through it. There is a component of this policy, which Cheryl will speak to, which does require this committee's input and direction. I'm sure she'll touch on that issue. Mr. Clerk.

Mr. Reynolds: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I just want to say that this is something that we take great pride in, and we'll be introducing it and discussing it with all members of staff – well, I think we already have one – to ensure that we continue to have a respectful workplace with respect to employees, how people are treated in the workplace. Cheryl will explain this in some detail.

This is an amended version of what the government of Alberta uses, I think it's safe to say, but there are certain components that are unique to the Legislative Assembly Office. As the briefing notes indicate, there is a component of this policy about which we will be seeking your guidance, possibly through the form of a motion with respect to member-employee contacts and disputes.

I just want to say that this is the product of not an unsubstantial amount of work to get this as far as it is. As I said, we're looking forward to rolling it out this fall. Cheryl and Shannon can discuss it in more detail, and then there's a follow-up item after this which goes beyond the employees' situation. Mr. Speaker, if I may.

Ms Scarlett.

The Chair: Yeah. Sure. Just to underline the points made by Rob, what we're talking about is the staff, the administrative side, if you will, of the policy. A component of that does require the direction of committee, and then there is a secondary issue, which we'll deal with after that, about member issues.

Cheryl, go ahead.

Ms Scarlett: With respect to our workplace policy for employees of the Leg. Assembly, right now we parallel the government of Alberta's policy, which is posted on our website under the employee information. What you see in front of you is a document that, as has been already expressed, parallels this policy. It has a few minor modifications. Most importantly, in terms of basic principles and processes they parallel the policy that exists right now and provide for both an informal resolution process and a formal resolution process. The intent of this document that we have before you here is to take and insert the LAO contacts, incorporate our LAO mission, vision, and values within the document in support of a respectful workplace.

As outlined, we are seeking the committee's direction. On page 10 there is a section dealing with complaints by an employee against a member or involving a member. Within that is where we are looking for some direction in terms of what you might recommend as the appropriate course of action.

The Chair: Nathan.

Mr. Cooper: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. There are three options. Upon some thought and contemplation I'm just curious to know if we may be able to combine two of the options to make a fourth option, I guess: option 1, where the matter could be referred to the member's whip, and the third option, or referred to the director of human resources. I think in a situation where a harassment complaint has come forward, we should do our best to ensure that the complainant or the harassed, I guess in this case, is as comfortable as possible in reporting that complaint. I think it would be reasonable for it to include that they may send the complaint to the member's whip or the director of human resources, providing the member or the employee in this case an either/or option. It's possible that the employee may be uncomfortable disclosing directly to the whip and would prefer to be able to disclose to human resources. In that case I think that it would be reasonable for the policy to provide an either/or, and then it would provide a wide range of choice, I guess, for the individual that is experiencing some challenges or some concerns.

The Chair: Can I just clarify your point? You would intend that HR would have at least the option to appoint an independent investigator if required. Do I understand your comment?

10:35

Mr. Cooper: I mean, yeah, I think that that would go sort of hand in hand with the process anyway. At the end of the day it's quite likely that human resources will have some obligation to inform the whip anyway, but it may be easier for the initial disclosure to be done to human resources.

The Chair: Mr. Nixon.

Mr. Nixon: Yeah. I would echo Mr. Cooper's comments. I think that merging options 1 and 3 together in some sort of combination makes the most sense. First, for obvious reasons an employee may feel uncomfortable reporting to the whip, but, second, we have to actually make sure that the whip is involved because the LAO is probably going to have a tough time once we get into caucus discipline issues or that type of stuff that may be combined. Certainly, when we talk about member to member, you know, that would be a different issue, but speaking as a caucus whip, I actually think it would make the most sense if we combined those two options.

The Chair: Mr. Piquette.

Mr. Piquette: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. First, I'd like to congratulate the LAO for the excellent work in putting these together. Just to sort of reiterate, of course, we are very committed to a work environment where members and staff feel that they're safe and respected and a place where disrespectful behaviour is not tolerated.

I also agree, of course, that there definitely needs to be a formal policy in place. I'm actually kind of surprised that between member and staff there hasn't been because that actually kind of leaves us open to – we could be considered negligent for not having done so.

There are other questions I'd like to ask. I'm curious about the education component because I know from my own personal experience with respectful workplace training for the city of Edmonton that it becomes part and parcel, that if you don't have a clear understanding of what these terms mean in detail, it's hard to change people's behaviour.

Coming down to specifics of, like, the decision points, I think that it might be beneficial for us to broaden the scope of the analysis. Now, I do appreciate that we have a crossjurisdictional

analysis just within Canada, but considering the variety there, there doesn't seem to be a lot of clear guidance from the others. I just wonder if perhaps broadening the scope to be looking outside of Canada might be appropriate.

Also, I guess, the other point would be that this is something we would really like to have a fulsome discussion about to be able to take that back and talk about with other members.

Oh, sorry. Go ahead, sir.

The Chair: There's certainly been, I can tell you – Cheryl can speak to the details – a practice in place, so there has been recognition of the principles that are addressed in here through practice. There's no question about that.

To the detailed question of looking at a cross-jurisdictional analysis, we're dealing with the administrative policy here. You have a question about a jurisdictional analysis across other Legislative Assemblies?

Mr. Piquette: Well, yeah. That's right. I mean, what do they do outside of Canada?

Ms Scarlett: Just by way of background, first off I need to emphasize that for as many years as a respectful workplace policy has existed, the Legislative Assembly has paralleled the policy of the public service. So we do have a policy in place. However, for ease of administration and for clarity for our employees we are wanting to take the public service one and turn it into our own so that it's got our contact information in it and employees are clear in terms of the scenarios. One of the scenarios that's unique is the one that we're talking about right now.

In this process, though, and just recently, in August, the HR representatives from Legislatures across Canada got together, as we do once a year, and this was a topic on the table, so there was extensive conversation in terms of the employee policies. I can assure you that all of the policies are very similar in nature, and as it relates to situations where there is a complaint by an employee involving a member, the mechanisms for addressing that are very similar to the options that we've outlined on page 10.

The Chair: Mr. McIver.

Mr. McIver: Yeah. I've got to support the previous comments on an either/or option between option 1 and option 3. I think it's consistent with the chart that talks about the first question in appendix 1: is the complainant comfortable with speaking to the respondent? Well, if they aren't, then they may not be comfortable speaking with the whip or they may not be comfortable speaking with the person from personnel. So it's giving them choices on someone they can talk to that they can feel comfortable with.

Also, going to HR may be seen as an escalation of the complaint. Some complaints need to be escalated – I get that – but I don't think it has to be if the HR person knows that it's not necessarily an escalation but the first stop on: there's a problem here that needs to be resolved. I think for a person who's been mistreated, giving them a couple of choices about whom to talk to is probably a good place to begin. I think it will probably allow for, we hope, most complaints to be resolved before they have to be escalated.

Anyway, I speak in support of the suggestion from Mr. Cooper, and I think Mr. Nixon supported it as well.

The Chair: Well, clearly, it's the thrust of this debate today. Yes, we'll move on to the next member-to-member issue, but we want to focus this debate on that one component; i.e., if there's a member and a staff person. The other parts of the policy have pretty much been in place for some time.

Mr. McIver: Yeah. I was speaking exclusively to that, Mr. Speaker. I thought that was clear, but just in case it wasn't, let me make it clear now, based on your comments, that I was only speaking about that.

The Chair: Thank you.
More discussion?

Ms Luff: Again, I appreciate all the work that's been done, and I'm glad that this is moving forward because it's a crucial piece to have, but given that we, you know, received these documents relatively recently – I think it's really important when we're discussing any issues of harassment. Going across Canada and looking at this, it's often an issue of sexual harassment, and we know that that's something that's underreported, and it's really important that people feel as comfortable as they can at all times to report because that's something that I think we want to encourage.

From my point of view, it's important that we have a chance to discuss this with other members of our caucus because if it is something that involves members, it's something that we need time to talk about as a group, so I'm not sure that I'm prepared to make a decision on this at this time.

The Chair: Okay. Thank you.

Mr. Cooper: I think that when it comes to member to member . . .

Mr. McIver: That's not what we're talking about now.

Mr. Cooper: I get that we're not talking about that now.

I think that when it comes to member to member, there is a lot of discussion that ought to continue to take place.

When it comes to the document before us, a document that essentially has been in practice over a number of years, which already works in partnership with or reflects the best practices that the GOA has established for the hundreds of thousands of employees that are employed by the GOA – that may be a slight overstatement, but if you count all the teachers, the thousands and thousands of GOA employees – the policy has had extensive review over the years, and really the only change is some language in this document compared to that one. So I think, personally, on this document we should move forward. I think that it's important that we do that.

10:45

I would like to propose a motion that includes merging the two options on page 10 – and we can vote on that; I would like to see us vote on that today – and then by all means more extensive cross-jurisdictional review and discussion when it comes to the member-to-member policies, which, of course, are much newer and really expedited because of some of the activities that have taken place in Ottawa over the past 18 months. I would like us to make a decision on this. I think it's important.

I think I would also like to see an education presentation made by the LAO in conjunction with party whips to caucus staffs. You know, I think this provides a good opportunity for each caucus to discuss and reaffirm our commitment to safe and inclusive workplaces.

If it's fine with you, I'll propose a motion, Mr. Speaker.

The Chair: Yeah. I just want to make – before I accept the motion, my sense is that there may be a desire to have a little bit more discussion on this matter. On a go-forward basis, at the same time I think there's a strong sense of agreement in the group in support of this policy. You are suggesting the integration of 1 and 3. Is that right?

Mr. Cooper: That's correct.

The Chair: Now, there were also some suggestions about – you made a reference to an education program and further discussion by your whips.

Mr. Cooper: Yeah. I think that would be a separate motion. If the policy is accepted today, then, yes, I would like to propose an additional motion that has to do with that. For now we can . . .

The Chair: Okay. Let's deal with the first one first. So your motion is – could you help?

Mr. Cooper: Sure. Just the wording as it stands in 1. I move that the Special Standing Committee on Members' Services – because they've asked for the request for a decision here – use all the language in 1 and that we add "and/or that the matter be referred to the director of human services and the Clerk, who may appoint an independent investigator if required."

The Chair: Karen, have we got that clear for the record? Would it be best that we read it?

Mrs. Sawchuk: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The wording that we have: that the Special Standing Committee on Members' Services' respectful workplace policy for the Legislative Assembly Office incorporate options 1 and/or 3 concerning complaints against members as outlined on page 10 of the draft document.

The Chair: Let's get clarification on that. What was the intent, Mr. Cooper?

Mr. Reynolds: Well, you would combine 1 and 3, and then you can say what you said before, to provide an option where – is it that employees could go to the director of human resource services or the whip?

Mr. Cooper: Correct.

Mrs. Sawchuk: So the correct motion would then read: incorporate options 1 and 3 concerning employee complaints against members as outlined on page 10 of the draft document.

The Chair: I'm seeking some guidance about the clarity here.

Mr. Cooper: Yeah. I'm fine with that motion, but I would like option 3 to change, from saying "shall" to "may appoint an independent investigator if required." I don't think that they should – if they go to the director of human resources or the Clerk, they should also have an option. There may be situations where an independent investigator isn't required, but if it says "shall," it doesn't give them that ability to work with the complainant.

The Chair: Mr. Piquette.

Mr. Piquette: Yeah. I mean, I really appreciate Mr. Cooper's, you know, goodwill to push forward on this, but I'm kind of afraid that the motion is not really clear. It's a bit of a hodgepodge, and I'm not really quite clear on the implications related to what all these changes are. I think that more information is needed, and we just need a bit more time to evaluate the options and the combinations here.

Mr. Nixon: I think the intent – we're going to need to hear it right back again – is to take options 1 and 3 and put them together but go a little bit further than that and actually put a partnership between caucus leadership and human resources so that there are several

ways for a person to feel comfortable reporting it. Second, it's also putting together a mechanism that's showing, you know, the connection between caucus leadership and human resources so that we could actually address the issue going forward. I think that's where the "and/or" is because it's not just that they – caucus leadership and human resources are going to have to work together once that's been reported; otherwise, you'll never be able to address it. Does that motion reflect that? I think that's what Mr. Cooper is trying to bring forward.

The Chair: I'm sensing that we need to get absolute clarity. With the support of the committee, can I just ask that we recess for two minutes, make sure that we've got a motion that is, I think, understood more clearly, and then deal with it? Is that agreeable?

Hon. Members: Agreed.

[The committee adjourned from 10:52 a.m. to 11:01 a.m.]

The Chair: Mr. Cooper, can I just clarify with the members that we all have a copy of the proposed motion. Could Karen or Mr. Cooper read it into the record?

Mr. Cooper: Moved by Mr. Cooper that the Special Standing Committee on Members' Services move that the respectful workplace policy for the Legislative Assembly Office combine options 1 and 3 concerning employee complaints against a member to provide employees the option to report complaints to the whip and/or director of human resources and the Clerk, who may appoint an independent investigator if required. Human resources and the Clerk would work with the whip of caucuses involved during the process.

Mr. Piquette: I guess just first I want to be very clear that, you know, we agree wholeheartedly that this is a critically important issue. We respect the work that's been done. However, I would like to move that we

adjourn debate on this motion at the present time for the reasons that we mentioned earlier, that we'd like to get some crossjurisdictional analysis outside of Canada if possible, particularly in the Westminster model, that we need to consult on.

The Chair: So it's being proposed that you would adjourn the debate on the motion proposed by Mr. Cooper.

Mr. Piquette: That's correct.

The Chair: Is it intended to a specific date or just simply tabled?

Mr. Piquette: Until the next meeting of the committee.

The Chair: I believe on a tabling motion there is no debate, if I'm advised correctly.

There's been a motion to adjourn debate on the motion proposed by Mr. Cooper until the next meeting of the Members' Services Committee. Did I understand your motion correctly?

Mr. Piquette: Yes.

Mr. McIver: Could I request a roll call on that, Mr. Speaker?

The Chair: Yes, you can request a roll call on the adjournment motion.

All in favour, please, of the adjournment motion?

Mr. S. Anderson: MLA Anderson.

Mr. Piquette: MLA Piquette.

Mr. Horne: MLA Horne.

Ms Luff: MLA Luff. In favour.

Mrs. Schreiner: MLA Schreiner.

Ms Jabbour: Can I ask a question, or do we have to do the vote right now? Okay. I guess I'll vote in favour of the adjournment. I just had a question about it.

The Chair: Anyone else in favour?

Mr. Fildebrandt? Mr. Fildebrandt may have left the meeting.
All opposed to the adjournment motion?

Mr. McIver: Rick McIver. Opposed.

Mr. Cooper: MLA Nathan Cooper. Opposed.

Mr. Nixon: MLA Jason Nixon. Opposed.

The Chair: The motion of adjournment until the next Members' Services Committee meeting is approved.

It's now time to move to the next related item.

Mr. Reynolds: Mr. Speaker, just before we get there, may I just make a – Ms Scarlett is going to comment at some point about the education programs that we are performing on the respectful workplace policy just so that members don't think that we're keeping quiet, as it were, about it. So at some point it might be useful if we could just explain what we're doing about that.

The Chair: I seek the guidance of the committee. It seems to me that it may be an appropriate time to do that in preparation for the next committee meeting as well as the lead-in to the next issue, at least indirectly.

Cheryl, would you like to proceed?

Ms Scarlett: Sure. Just briefly, because the question came up, again, LAO is committed to a work environment where employees feel engaged and safe, obviously, as we all are. As part of some of the initiatives that we have put into place more recently, LAO employees, those that report to the Clerk, as part of their offer letter are provided with a copy of the existing government policy that we parallel, and they need to acknowledge that they are aware of that and have read that.

We also have new employee orientation sessions that we take and conduct, and that is a component in terms of making sure that employees are aware of that. We have just instituted and are starting to hold webinars with constituency staff in terms of remote new employee orientations to go over the basic HR stuff, and that will be part of that.

We look forward to any invitations from caucuses to take and review what exists right now in terms of the policy that we take and parallel so that everyone is aware in terms of the importance of a respectful workplace in the LAO.

The Chair: Thank you, Cheryl. Any questions or comments with respect – Colin.

Mr. Piquette: Thank you very much, Ms Scarlett, for filling that in. Yeah. It wasn't really apparent from the documents. I'm happy that you guys do realize that it's an integral part of it.

Thanks.

Mr. McIver: On the complaints between members – is that what we're on?

The Chair: Yes, we are.

Mr. McIver: I just want to be clear on that.

The Chair: We're going to move there.

The question that Debbie had: was your earlier comment procedural?

Ms Jabbour: I think it was just more clarity. I wanted to understand the rationale for the adjournment. I just needed to be a little clearer why we are adjourning, but I think it's been covered.

The Chair: Okay. Now I think, based on what Cheryl said, we move forward. I've been approached in my capacity as Speaker over the last several months about – our staff, I know, have had discussions with other members about a desire to examine the question of a member-to-member harassment policy. You have a briefing note prepared as well as a backgrounder in terms of – staff have already undertaken crossjurisdictional research on this matter. We'll open up discussion on that issue.

Mr. McIver, did you have a question related to the new item, then?

Mr. McIver: Well, I wanted to point out what I think is the obvious, but the obvious isn't always obvious, so I will point it out. I know we're past the previous item, but there is a document there worth referencing on this item, and the document worth referencing is the list of unacceptable behaviours. Let me just say that the list of unacceptable behaviours is every day in question period. It's common practice in terms of taunting. We all do it. It's just for the committee's reference; I'm not pointing fingers at any particular person or group of persons. That is an interesting fact. I'll be surprised if anybody argues that eye rolling, finger wagging, objectionable and insulting gestures, angry outbursts – I don't think we've had too many displays of pornographic, racist, or offensive pictures or materials. That's a good thing. But we get taunting, ridiculing, and belittling on a regular basis. Anyways, you get the point.

11:10

I appreciate that there have to be limits on people's behaviours. I know that in the federal Parliament there was quite a to-do over the Prime Minister elbowing a Member of Parliament and some considerable public interest and fallout from that particular event. Having a set of basic standards is probably a good thing as long as it's not set up that it can be used as a weapon, that we all complain about each other two weeks before election time to make sure the other people in the other parties all can't get elected because of some perceived or real offence that we've taken.

My only point in saying this, Mr. Speaker, is that while having a set of rules that limit behaviour is a good thing, I think we have to be careful here because of the competitive nature of what we do, you know? I think we all need to take this seriously because of that.

The Chair: As we lead into this discussion, I think it was an oversight on my part. I think maybe we should just give the staff, Mr. Clerk, some background. There is material you already touched on. Were there some comments that you or staff would like to make to the research compiled thus far?

Mr. Cooper: Mr. Speaker.

The Chair: Yeah. Go ahead.

Mr. Cooper: Prior to getting the background on whatever the new point of discussion is, I was under the impression that we had adjourned on my motion, but that wouldn't have adjourned all debate on the respectful workplace policy for Legislative Assembly office employees. Like, we didn't decide anything else around the policy. I was under the impression that all we had done was said that we'll talk about page 10, which is the request, at a later date but that there may very well have been other discussion on the respectful workplace policy for employees of the Legislative Assembly.

The Chair: Point well taken. It may be that I presumed that we would have that discussion. Cheryl's educational issue, I think that was the reason why she said that comment specifically: respect education. But I see your point. If the committee would like some more discussion on the matter, I guess that's appropriate. I thought we were moving on to the next item, but . . .

Mr. Cooper: My sense is that the committee wouldn't, but I certainly would.

Mr. McIver: My apologies to Mr. Cooper. That's why I asked whether we'd moved on before I went on with my previous statement, because I wanted to make sure that I wasn't out of order.

The Chair: Would you like to speak to other items, Mr. Cooper?

Mr. Cooper: Yeah. I would like to speak to other items. I'd also like to move another motion that would include accepting the draft document with the exception of item 10, particularly because the LAO has done a significant amount of work. It was just a few minutes ago where Mr. Piquette was expressing his displeasure or concern around not having – you know, he made the implication that there was no document in place prior, so that would be disappointing. Now, for whatever reason, the government caucus members have chosen to not accept this document. So I think it would be advantageous for us to accept the portions that we do agree on.

You know, the document was posted last Tuesday for us to review. There was a significant amount of time for us to have discussion amongst our colleagues prior to the meeting. The government members haven't asked for additional research on point 10, so I'm not sure what else they're waiting for other than seemingly delaying what is a good policy and document.

So I'd like to move a motion that we accept the draft report with the exception of the adjourned motion.

The Chair: Well, Mr. Cooper, the document was shared. It's an administrative document that's been in place certainly by the provincial government, as you heard, in practice. So the intent was that, yes, if there were information items related to the point – but the motion that was moved by yourself, which is still on the table until next Members' Services, was only with respect to the options scenario on page 10. I'm trying to understand the reason for approving a motion to accept the document, an administrative document. Is that your intent?

Mr. Cooper: No. I think we should accept the document because it's a good document, and delaying it makes little to no sense. There's no additional information that is being asked to be provided by administration, so I think that it would be advantageous for us to accept the portions of the document that there are total agreement on because sending the right message and communicating to employees and individuals that we take this seriously is important. We had the opportunity to do that today, and for whatever reason the government members chose to delay that process. I think that

we still have the chance to accept everything with the exception of this section that has now been adjourned so that we can move forward and the document doesn't get tied up. I mean, it's possible that Members' Services isn't going to meet until next year.

The Chair: I could certainly personally expedite that process.

Mr. Cooper: Well, sure.

The Chair: Let's be clear. As staff explained at the outset, this practice has been going on for considerable time.

Mr. Cooper: I'm very aware.

The Chair: The policy statement that came to the committee was only with respect to section 10, so there's not going to be any delay. Staff have already been working on – Cheryl identified the educational sessions, et cetera. So your motion seems to me somewhat redundant in that it's an administrative policy that the committee was informed of. The staff was asking for direction only with respect to page 10, the options with respect to staff and members. That's the motion that was tabled. The other stuff will not be held up or delayed. It's in practice.

Mr. Cooper: Well, it's in practice in a very different form.

The Chair: Ms Luff, did you have a question?

Ms Luff: I just wanted to check that this document is already in practice. It's already been approved; we don't need to approve it any further than the item that was requested, correct?

Mr. Cooper: The government of Alberta's policy, which the LAO shadows or uses as theirs, is in existence. The LAO-specific document, which includes language that the LAO uses, not language that the government uses, isn't in place. So, yes, there is a document and a policy that has been in place over a long period of time, and that is important. But this document specifically made changes other than to just page 10, including removing some language that is in the GOA document that isn't in this document. You know, both documents are publicly available, so they could have been compared prior, which is what I had the opportunity to do. So, no, the document is different than the GOA one. The content is very similar because it follows the same processes. It follows the same resolution process, but it's actually different, so I think it should be accepted.

I also do not understand why we can't move on past page 10. I get that the government members aren't ready. It's just that I can't understand why the government wouldn't. If they had read the brief and discussed with their colleagues, there was no way that they shouldn't have been ready to move on this today.

11:20

The Chair: So the motion that you're proposing to me is that you would ask for committee's receipt of the administrative policy, with the exception of page 10. Am I understanding correctly your motion, to receive the policy?

Mr. Cooper: No. It's to approve the document, with the exception of the Type of Complaint section found on page 10.

The Chair: The word you have is "support," that the Members' Services Committee support the respective workplace policy provided by the LAO with the exception of the section which is subject to the adjournment motion.

Mr. Cooper: "Support" or "approve" I am fine with.

The Chair: “Support” or “approve”: that’s the question.

Ms Jabbour, before I go to the question, did you have another comment?

Ms Jabbour: Yeah. I think this is what I was getting at, looking for clarity on the motion to adjourn this little piece. That was also my understanding, that the LAO has prepared a document that’s going to be unique to the LAO, that will apply to the LAO and members and so on as opposed to what we’ve been using up till now, which is the government policy. I’m not sure it makes sense to approve that piece and leave this out or whether we should just wait and then we’ve got it all together and then do it.

That’s just a side point, but I do think we maybe need little more clarity on what’s being asked for with page 10. I had heard MLA Piquette comment about looking for crossjurisdictional information, but I don’t think we actually formally asked for that. That’s what I’m guessing now. I’m seeing from the opposition that there’s a little confusion, too. They don’t understand what’s being asked for. So maybe that’s the piece that’s missing, that we actually have to give some direction to the LAO what’s being looked for there. Does that make sense?

The Chair: The motion is to support or approve. Is there any desire related to the point Ms Jabbour is raising to direct staff to come back with more detailed information? Is that what I’m understanding?

Ms Luff: Yeah. I would say so. I have read this document and I have looked at the options, and my feeling, based on the cross-jurisdictional analysis that I’ve read, is that I think something better could possibly be found. Like, a lot of this is stuff where if I were an employee, I wouldn’t necessarily feel comfortable making a complaint, and to assume that Canada has absolutely the best options on this kind of policy I think is not necessarily the case. We have a chance to – this is very important. It’s a very important piece of policy, and we don’t want to put forward a motion that creates sort of a double-barrelled way to come up with options.

Yes. I would like to possibly request that we do some further crossjurisdictional analysis across more Westminster-style systems that are outside of Canada in order to come up with, really, the best possible option and give us time . . .

The Chair: Are you speaking to the motion, Robyn?

Ms Luff: No. Sorry. I’m speaking to – we’ve been told that they’re confused why we want more time, so I’m trying to explain that.

The Chair: Okay. We have a motion, which I’ve read, I think, into the record already, to
approve the workplace policy document provided by the LAO
with the exception of section 10, which is subject to the adjournment motion.

That’s the motion that’s on the floor by Mr. Cooper. Are there any further questions with respect to the support motion?

Mr. McIver: Yes. We’ll be supporting it because administration has demonstrated that they’ve done their homework. They have compared with other jurisdictions in other areas and what’s being done right now. They have essentially mirrored what’s being done in the public service across Alberta, and this would be a good time to reward them for that good work by approving it. Since nobody seems to have a problem with it, I don’t know why we wouldn’t approve it.

The Chair: Again, I need to say that there was – nonetheless, you have a motion on the floor. All in favour of the motion that’s been read to support – I believe this is the motion that Mr. Cooper made.

All in favour, say aye. All opposed? Excuse me, Mr. Fildebrandt, are you with us or not? He’s not. All opposed, please say no. The motion is carried unanimously.

Is it now timely that we can move to the discussion about member to member? It’s been suggested that maybe the point that Robyn and Debbie made, whether or not you wanted to have that direction now, prior to moving to the next matter – is that where you were, Mr. Nixon?

Mr. Nixon: Yes. Absolutely, Mr. Speaker.

The Chair: Yeah. Okay. I think the intent, as I heard the discussion, was to give a little more clarity and direction to the staff that the committee would like them to bring back for future discussion. I don’t want to put words in your mouth, but I sense that’s what you’re doing.

Robyn.

Ms Luff: Yes. Yes. We would like some more information, some more analysis of options for harassment policies that are perhaps outside of Canada.

The Chair: Debbie, did you have a point as well?

Ms Jabbour: Yeah. I’m in agreement with that, but, you know, it occurs to me in looking at this – and I don’t want to spill over into the next part of the topic about member to member – that for this complaint process, where we’re considering what is going to be the process to deal with complaints, I think it could also affect what we do when we’re talking about member to member in that we may want to have a similar process or something that is consistent, in any respect. I think it’s important that we get that information, that research and how it would apply for employees involving MLAs and then, as we move into the next piece, how it might involve members against members and have some kind of consistency in our reporting process.

The Chair: Ms Dean.

Ms Dean: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We’d be pleased to undertake some research. I just would like to get some clear indication. If we were to get information with respect to the Westminster policies that are in place as well as Australia, would that provide you with what you need?

Ms Luff: You know, like, if we really want to get it right and we really want to make sure we’re doing absolutely the best thing, even some parliaments outside of Westminster. I always look to Scandinavia, and I know they’re not necessarily a Westminster system.

The Chair: There’s no motion on the floor yet. Before we go there, I think, Jason, did you have a point that you wanted to raise related to this matter?

Mr. Nixon: Mr. Speaker, you went where I was trying to go, and that is the point that we had adjourned that motion and afterwards not seen the government indicate that they actually had tasks they wanted to assign. I’m still looking. I’m a little bit confused what the government’s concerns are with the original proposal, but I’m not holding my breath to get that answer. As long as we can get the instruction so that this doesn’t go on forever. I think this is a pretty important policy, and the idea of dragging it out for months and months and years, possibly, seems unfortunate.

The Chair: I never understood that we were taking that kind of time.

Is there a motion that someone is prepared to move with respect to the direction, the point that Ms Dean made, the kind of information you'd like to have come back from staff?

Mr. Piquette.

Mr. Piquette: Yes. I'd like to make a motion that LAO staff be directed to research jurisdictions outside of Canada, primarily within the Westminster model but perhaps one other reference, and that the reporting would be back for the next meeting of this committee.

The Chair: We'll get to the details. We said the next Members' Services Committee meeting. That may have a bearing on the amount of detail that you want, how much time it would take to get it back here. We need to be conscious of that as to how much detail you want. Can we please read the motion? I want to hold off to see what the motion is first. Karen, would you like to take a stab at it?

11:30

Mrs. Sawchuk: I'm going to try and take a stab at that, Mr. Speaker. Thank you. Moved that

the Members' Services Committee direct Legislative Assembly Office staff to complete research of jurisdictions outside of Canada, primarily within the Westminster model but also including one additional jurisdiction, and to report back to the Members' Services Committee at its next meeting.

I should have put in there – I'm sorry; my apologies:

with respect to the Respectful Workplace Policy document.

Mr. Piquette: Between members? I guess it's . . .

Some Hon. Members: No, no, no.

The Chair: No. To be clear, Colin, we've not gotten to that. I wanted to get there sooner, but we're not there yet. We're still talking about the original. The point was raised: research the background with respect to page 10 of the administrative policy on a respectful workplace. That's where we're at, for clarity. Was your motion applied to the first policy matter? It still applies. Is that correct?

Mr. Piquette: Yes. I'm sorry.

The Chair: Mr. McIver and then Mr. Nixon.

Mr. McIver: Yeah. You know what? With all due respect, I won't be supporting this. We can also ask what the policies are on Mars and on the moon. I'm not sure that there's a reason to hold up good work on a policy that's consistent with what's been explained to us, that the entire civil service uses right now in Alberta. I won't be supporting it because I don't see any point that's in the public interest to support it.

The Chair: Okay. Jason? Pass?

On the motion by Mr. Piquette, which you've already heard, directing staff, all in favour, please say aye. Opposed, please say no. The motion is carried.

Hon. members, is it now appropriate for us to move to the item Complaints between Members? Seeing a consensus that you'd like to, I'm going to ask the Clerk and Ms Dean to sort of speak to the background of this research, which has, I think, already been touched on.

Go ahead.

Mr. Reynolds: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. This is an issue – you'll notice that we don't have any substantive recommendations to make to you other than that you may want to look at this in a subcommittee. It's because this is really an issue about how

members deal with other members, and we're loath at this point to make any recommendations on this issue. It's a development, and Shannon can certainly speak to the specifics.

This issue of member-to-member harassment is something that's gotten a lot of traction in most Canadian jurisdictions, I would say. Certainly, it was the subject of a committee of the House of Commons that studied it. They came up with recommendations that are now part of the standing orders. They're an appendix to the *Standing Orders of the House of Commons*. Many other provinces, certainly, have given the matter to committees to study.

Of course, it's not mandatory that members undertake a review, but quite frankly we thought it was something that was worthy of a conversation between members, whether at this meeting or subsequent meetings, to ensure that there's an expression of the views of members on this subject, that's so important to them.

If I may turn it over to Ms Dean.

The Chair: I would add, just adding to what the Clerk said earlier, that I've been approached by several members of the Legislature over this past year suggesting that this was a matter that did need attention. So the question is open for discussion here. It's suggested that it is going to require some research, some dialogue to bring it back. The floor is open.

I see Mr. McIver sort of leading the discussion. If there is some kind of an agreement on the matter, I'm hoping that the committee can reach a consensus on the manner in which we can move forward from today.

Mr. McIver: Okay. I already spoke on this, so I'll be brief, Mr. Speaker. I would say that this is a little bit different than the last item. For the last item we had the information in time to be ready for today, but this is one where perhaps not all members of the committee have had a chance to gather with their respective caucuses to discuss this issue, which, really, when you talk of member-to-member things, probably would be legitimate for caucus discussions, you know, through committee members, and to come back here.

I don't want to cut off debate, so what I would say to you, Mr. Speaker, is that at the time of your choosing, I would be prepared to move a tabling of this to some appropriate point in the future, after members of the committee have had a chance to have a caucus discussion with their respective caucuses to see what they may or may not want to do here. I think that would be appropriate here.

Again, it's not my will to cut off the committee's discussion by saying this, which is why I leave it to your good judgment, Mr. Speaker, as to when and if we go there.

The Chair: Certainly, it's at the will of the committee. The majority of the committee would decide. The recommendation, specifically, was that a subcommittee be struck to review the matter, but again it's at the will of the committee. That might gain ground on the matter and then begin the action plan. I'm presuming that there is a general consensus, a desire to pursue this further, but again I will hold that motion until later.

Are there any other comments? Robyn.

Ms Luff: Yeah. I mean, I think I'd agree that obviously there's a general consensus to move this forward and to come up with something on this. You know, as to Mr. McIver's earlier comments about how we treat each other in the House, I have spoken with many folks who are generally appalled at how we treat each other in the House and feel that it leads to harassment of elected officials in other forums. I know that many of us deal with awful, awful things being said to us on a daily basis, and if it stems from the fact

that we say awful things to each other, then that's something that I think we need to look at and is crucial.

As to how we move forward with this, I think that's a discussion that needs to be had with caucus. I know there are many people within our caucus who are very interested in this. My concern would just be that a subcommittee would mean that it's only open to members of this committee, correct?

The Chair: Most probably. That would have been past practice.

Ms Luff: I know there are people who are far more interested in this than myself who are not on this committee who might like to be part of coming up with any sort of policy around this.

The Chair: My assumption, though, is that – and, again, it's the will of the committee that determines – a subcommittee may well incorporate into its process a consultation with all of the members of the Legislature. The suggestion was to move forward, but I'm hearing two of the members suggest that there be more discussion on the matter within your individual caucuses, if I heard that correctly.

Nathan.

Mr. Cooper: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. A process that I think I would be keen on is if we were to direct administration to come back with a couple of recommendations on possible policy options for us and then to be able to discuss those possible policy options instead of going down the subcommittee route – individual members of any caucus, of course, can attend any Members' Services meeting, as Mr. Clark is today – and then we can make a decision based upon those recommendations.

You know, ultimately, at the end of the day, the subcommittee is going to quite likely do that same task, so whether or not we do it at this table or we do it at that table, I don't know if there's a whole ton of benefit. I'm not totally opposed to a subcommittee – I think that it accomplishes the same task – but I think that the review can quite likely be done at this table, and because of the importance and significance of the issue, it's probably a reasonable thing for us to do as a committee of the whole, if you will. But, you know, at the end of the day, if there's a general sense that a subcommittee would be better, that's probably fine as well. I just think that we should quite likely do this around this table.

11:40

The Chair: With respect to all the members, my sense is that it does require a fair amount of dialogue amongst the members themselves. To have staff presume what the wishes and desires and issues are – clearly, they're going to do them. You already have some research. They can certainly do some more if necessary and determined.

I'm just interpreting the sense of the room. Mr. McIver proposed a motion that the matter be tabled to give opportunities for the members to speak to their caucuses. That's generally what I understood. Did I interpret that correctly?

Mr. McIver: Yes. I haven't moved it, but I suggested that I might, should you determine that that's a good idea, Mr. Speaker.

The Chair: Well, I'm thinking that that's not a bad idea, but that's at the will of this committee.

Ms Jabbour: I just want to comment that this has been an issue that's kind of been percolating for a while, and I think that just delaying it by going back and talking to everybody – I don't think that's quite enough. I think we really should decide on a formal process. Either we put a committee together to do it or we, you know, go forward in some way.

Just to add to that, you know, it's a pretty complex issue, as Mr. McIver pointed out. There are things that go on. I know that in Quebec, when they tried to develop theirs, they struggled with that as well. We have to look at member to member – it's not a staff issue; it's a member issue, so I think it's important that the members have a chance to work on this and make it more focused. I see that a couple of other provinces are doing the same thing. They've got a committee considering that, so we've got examples that we can look to.

That would be my suggestion. Let's do a subcommittee.

The Chair: Who would like to test the motion on this matter?

Mr. McIver: I don't want to offend Ms Jabbour, but I think that's what I was suggesting. She said that it's a member-to-member discussion, but that's what caucus is, a member-to-member discussion, so I don't think we're actually disagreeing.

In that spirit, I will move – and I'm willing to take some advice on this – to the first meeting more than 30 days after this one, maybe. I'm not sure when we are meeting next, Mr. Speaker, datewise. That way, hopefully, all caucuses will meet in the next month and have a chance to have some discussion although I'm not married to that timeline. I'm just trying to be easy to work with for everybody on this, if you will.

Mr. Cooper: Could you include that they might have a discussion around a subcommittee or the Members' Services Committee so that we can come back and figure out . . .

Mr. McIver: Yes. Moved that we recommend to Members' Services that they talk about the timing and format of a subcommittee on this topic and that we adjourn debate on this today to give respective caucuses an opportunity to talk with their MLA colleagues about what a complaints-between-members policy might look like.

The Chair: For the record Mr. Fildebrandt has joined the meeting in person.

Okay. Karen, that had some addenda to it, a little more detail. Can we take a stab at it?

Mr. McIver: I know. It's making sausage. I apologize, but we're doing stuff in real time, which is always a bad idea.

Mrs. Sawchuk: Mr. Speaker, the final suggested motion: moved by Mr. McIver that

the matter of a subcommittee to address complaints between members be deferred to the next meeting of the Members' Services Committee.

The Chair: Is that the intention of your motion?

Mr. McIver: Yes. I think that'll accomplish most of the other things that we talked about as well.

The Chair: All in favour of the motion, please say aye. Opposed, please say no. The motion is carried.

It's a quarter to 12, folks. We could break for lunch now. I'm wondering if there's any merit in dealing with one of these items in the next 15 minutes. What's your wish? To break for lunch, or are you prepared to deal with – I'm thinking of if you maybe wanted to deal with 5(f). I went to (f). I was skipping over one.

Ms Luff: I can give my report in 15 minutes.

Mr. Cooper: I'd be happy to do (f).

The Chair: Well, how about this? Yours is the subcommittee on family violence?

Mr. Reynolds: On the family-friendly workplace.

The Chair: Oh. Yeah. I wonder where that came from.

If it's agreed, could we deal with that item and then break for lunch?

Robyn, do you want to start out?

Ms Luff: Sure. All right. My understanding is that today I was just bringing forward a report on the work that the subcommittee on family-friendly Legislatures has done to date. I'll just run through very quickly sort of where we're at in terms of possible recommendations. I think we're mostly in agreement. I did have a conversation with my caucus – I apologize to committee members who I haven't told – and I think the committee probably has to have one more meeting just to firm up final recommendations because I think there are some wording things that maybe need to be changed.

Generally speaking, we have come to a general consensus on the following, the first being changes to the Legislative Assembly Act. Generally speaking, I think we want to recommend that there be a change to the part of the act surrounding absences that specifically allows absences for care of a child, whether that be newborn or adopted; for family reasons; and then also at the discretion of the Speaker. The model that we liked best for that was Newfoundland, which allowed several things. Basically, change the Legislative Assembly Act so it's very clear that you are allowed to be absent for reasons of parenting. I'm having difficulty with my computer. It's being difficult.

Okay. Then the second thing was that we are looking at potential changes to the standing orders to make it explicit within the standing orders that infants are allowed on the floor of the Legislature. That is obviously allowed already for certain instances, but make it really clear that if you are feeding a baby in any capacity, you are allowed to have that child with you on the floor of the Legislature.

The third thing that we discussed was increased access for family members to the Legislature. Several of us thought it would be lovely if our spouses or other family members could access the parkade if you're coming in and out to visit. Just having increased access for family members: that's another thing that we are looking at recommending.

The fourth thing is that we need to have more baby change tables, just generally making both the Legislature Building and the Federal building more accessible to people with families. So we're requesting increased numbers of change tables. I think that currently there are only two in the Leg. Building and four in the Federal building, so we're looking for more of those and then improved signage to go with those so that people know where they are and also other things like high chairs or booster seats in the cafeteria, just indications that the Legislature is a place where you can bring kids, because it doesn't really seem that way right now.

11:50

We have already set up quiet-room facilities in the Confederation Room for mothers with small infants, but it would be nice to have a place either in the Legislature Building or the Federal building where one could take small children. In discussions with ministers McLean and Payne, having a place that was child friendly, where a nanny or a caregiver could take a child so that they could run around, just a room with, you know, toys and a place for children to go, would be nice. So we're recommending that we look into that.

What else? We're proposing that there be a guide so that when you do become pregnant or are looking at adopting a child or have a new addition to your family, there is a guide that you are provided that outlines the steps necessary to ensure that you can have your caregiver access whatever areas need to be accessed and other things, what the considerations are that you need to take as a member if you are having a child, so that the steps are really clear and easy and you don't have to go and find someone who's done it before. Having a clear guide: we're recommending that as well.

There was some consideration of looking into the feasibility of a daycare and recommending a feasibility study, but from my conversations with Infrastructure apparently there has already been an area identified in the Federal building that would work as a child care facility, so I'm not sure that we actually need to recommend that. This is what Minister Mason told me, but I can find out more before the next meeting, looking at that.

Those are the things that we've discussed. Am I missing anything, members of the subcommittee?

Mr. Cooper: No. The general overview of the discussion that took place: I think you've done a good job of that. You know, we will make some formal recommendations to the committee. I would expect that those could be completed after one additional meeting. Depending on when the Members' Services Committee meets again, I would say that we certainly can have that work completed and have the recommendations made formally to Members' Services. I don't see any challenge with those. I think we have made an effort to balance interests in that as well. I think that it should be a good set of recommendations, and I hope that the committee will accept them and that we can move forward.

I might just add that I know that the Official Opposition would be more than happy to forgo our little office space over at the Legislature if the Minister of Infrastructure would provide us with a real office. We'd be happy to give that space for a family-friendly space.

Ms Luff: Well, ongoing negotiations to come, I'm sure.

Mr. Fildebrandt: It's a great closet.

Ms Luff: It's a fantastic closet. Well, I don't want to put children in a closet.

Because I don't know when the next meeting of this committee will be, there is some sense of urgency amongst members of our caucus, anyway, in getting the changes to the Legislative Assembly Act under way. I don't know if we want to make that piece formal today as a committee and wait on the rest of the things or if there will be another Members' Services Committee meeting shortly.

The Chair: There are several items that have been addressed today which may have bearing upon the next meeting date. Is it fair for me to assume, based on your comments and Nathan's, that at the outside it would be 30 days and at the inside maybe 15?

Ms Luff: Okay.

The Chair: That timing, I presume, will be in part determined by the rest of our afternoon meeting here as well and the directions you give. A couple of items that have been addressed today are requiring some staff time. Let's go back to that at the end. We'll set the date at the end based upon the information, but the notes of the meeting will say that you will be available to report soon to the committee.

Ms Luff: Yeah.

The Chair: Hon. members, I am advised that there is lunch in the Canadian Shield Room. What's your wish with respect to reconvening? At 1 o'clock? Is that agreed? Let's recess till 1 o'clock.

Thank you.

[The committee adjourned from 11:55 a.m. to 1 p.m.]

The Chair: Welcome back.

Mr. Greg Clark has joined the meeting.

Mr. McIver: With all due respect, he joined the meeting before.

The Chair: Yes, I know, but in person.

I believe we are at item 5(e) on the agenda, constituency/caucus expenditure guidelines. Allow me just to make some introductory remarks. I know there have been communications to at least all of the House leaders and maybe by this stage all MLAs as well. I've had several discussions over this first year. The Clerk and I more recently discussed the possible need for a long-range plan, maybe modernizing, updating some of our systems within LAO. You would have seen communications about that, that we're looking at doing a review of our various procedures in the LAO, to modernize them, bring them up to date, et cetera.

Let me just touch on that process because today's topic, from my perspective, is that we are looking at the administrative systems, so to what degree do we need to look at our current resources, our past resources, transaction processes that we have had in place and whether or not there's a need to maybe modernize and update them. That issue is focused exclusively on the how, the administrative stuff of what we're doing. We would expect that the results of that review would be available in late November, early December.

The topic today, though, is – as you look at the guidelines for both constituencies as well as caucuses but also, for that matter, all consolidated Members' Services Committee existing orders, what I hope we can focus on today is: okay; whatever decisions this committee wishes to take with respect to what you want certain practices and procedures to be, this is your opportunity, through whatever process you determine, to look at what you want to see changed in there and what needs to be updated, et cetera. I hope I'm making it clear; it's the systems and processes versus the procedure, if you will, on one side, and the policy and direction. It's the policy and direction that I hope we can deal with here.

I think there's probably – how you do that: certainly, from my perspective, there are possibilities of a subcommittee, all-party committee to look at those. You have some attachments on some issues that you may or may not have but that staff have identified, that they think you may or may not want to look at. But it's that debate which I hope the committee can initiate a direction for and to report back accordingly in the future.

I'll stop speaking there and open the matter up for discussion.

Mr. Reynolds: Could I just make a comment, Mr. Speaker?

The Chair: Yeah.

Mr. Reynolds: Hi. Thanks very much. I just want to reiterate what the Speaker said in the sense of: what you as the Members' Services Committee have an opportunity to do is to look at the governance system concerning expenditures. We have different rules depending on the expenditure. We have constituency allowances and members' services allowances that relate to your constituency office. We have some rules about that that have developed over the years. Based on the premise about the constituency and the member's role in the constituency, a few years ago, well, maybe 10 now – that happens when you're around for a long time – there were some rules

developed about caucus expenditures because largely what was happening was that people were saying, "Well, that's not really a constituency expenditure; that's a caucus expenditure," but there were very few rules around it, and the rules are not as crystal clear as some would want. Some want a great deal of certainty.

Those are the major expenditure areas that there's been a distinction, constituency and caucus, and quite frankly we may have assumed sort of a greater understanding of things when after the last election, you know, maybe we didn't do a good enough job of communication or education in terms of understanding the distinctions and the boundaries. Even though I wasn't Clerk, I'm willing to assume responsibility for that. We can do a good job, I think, in explaining where we see the boundaries lie.

The other thing is that I know that there's a great desire for certainty in the world and certainly in this area. I think, as is stated in the briefing note, if you look at something the Auditor General said in a review he conducted, really what you're looking for is a backbone of principle in some ways rather than a core set of rules. I'm not saying that rules are a bad thing or that certainty is a bad thing. It's just sometimes in this environment they're difficult to find, so people have to make the best judgments they can based on what they perceive to be the rules as they exist.

Really, it gets down to adjudicating, like, what is something that public money should be spent on in the sense that, you know, is it something that would be too partisan? Is it something that, well, public money should be legitimately spent on as opposed to spending it on, really, party-related activities, which I'm not saying occurs, but I'm saying that it's sort of one of those things out there that touches on what could occur in terms of expenditures or how it's perceived to be.

This is something that's not unique to one caucus or grouping in the Assembly. But your role in setting the rules is something that's very important, and I think it's something only you can do. We as officials can't do it. I mean, of course, the Assembly can do it through legislation, but this committee has been entrusted with so many things, and this would be one of them.

I can tell you that as the LAO we welcome you having this discussion. We welcome you engaging in a discussion and debate that we would like to help inform about where money is spent, where money can be spent because I know that everyone here wants to make sure that it's all spent responsibly, and we want to help you in performing that task. So we very much look forward to this discussion.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Chair: Just to highlight the points that the Clerk has made, that the first part of the administrative process and system are clear, there will be consultations with all 87 members of the Legislature to get their perspective on the business processes: what's worked, what you'd like to see improved, other suggestions.

1:10

Also, there will be – the exact details are yet to be fleshed out – focus groups as well as individual discussions with the caucus staff and other key stakeholders that have an opinion on the business transactions process. You can expect that you will be contacted in the next probably three to four weeks, maybe a little bit longer than that. I'm always cautious, but it is targeted to begin by approximately December 1, so you will all get an opportunity to provide your input as well as those other major stakeholders.

Today we want to focus on the review process for the guidelines, consolidated Members' Services Committee orders, et cetera. I open the discussion. Mr. McIver.

Mr. McIver: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'll start at a rudimentary level here. I got this piece of paper today, that I've not seen before because I didn't need to see it before, the members' expense claim for the Legislative Assembly committees. Sure, you check the box for what committee you're on, and it has your staying-in-Edmonton allowance, which is no different than what we're already getting. It has a meal allowance, which is no different than we're already getting. It has a mileage allowance, which is no different than we're already getting.

I can't help but ask myself: what if on the regular expense form that we fill out there is just a place to put in the comments of this committee that we're at and the reason that we came to Edmonton and had these expenses rather than separate forms? I mean, there's probably some consolidation just that way that could be done to simplify things. I think we all understand that you're not allowed to claim twice for the same night here or twice for the same meal here or twice for the same mileage up and back. There's probably a bit of paper reduction that could be done quite simply.

I'm just saying that we, the royal "we," could do a sweep of things to make it simpler and better right now, which is a good idea. Probably if there is an ongoing repository person or an e-mail address or some place where we could send suggestions on how to make things simpler and easier for everybody, then I'm sure that between the 87 members and our support staff we could probably simplify things over time quite a bit. I don't mean to cast any negative reflection or suggestion on anybody or anything. I'm just saying that if we try, we can probably make it simpler, and it'll probably end up costing the taxpayers a little bit less money to do what we're already doing.

The Chair: Trevor.

Mr. Horne: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I appreciate this issue being brought before the committee. I understand that the review is related to a letter submitted by all House leaders on September 9.

Mr. Reynolds: No. Sorry, Mr. Speaker, that's not quite true. That's not quite accurate. It's not a result of the House leaders' letter.

The Chair: No. This was a matter that dates back to, actually, the new Clerk and myself. Almost immediately we were having discussions, so it goes long before that.

Mr. Horne: Okay. Regardless, I still see the two as having some interplay between them. Perhaps an administrative review could point to: "You know, the administration is getting bogged down on this line; it should be clarified" or something of that nature. I see the two as being related in some manner.

In that light, I was wondering if there is a timeline that the Speaker and the Clerk have on the more specific review that was requested by the House leaders.

The Chair: So we're talking about the administrative system? Is that what your focus is on?

Mr. Horne: That's what this particular question is on.

The Chair: The Clerk just passed me a note. I said December 1. It may be December 15, but the process will be starting almost – in fact, it's started, and the individual consultations and input by committees and caucuses, et cetera, you can expect in the very near future.

Your questions, though, are focused on the administrative review. Is that correct?

Mr. Horne: My first question. I have a few others.

The Chair: Okay. I hope we've answered that. Any others?

Mr. Horne: Yeah. Just for some clarity, would you agree that there might be some interplay between the two reviews, not necessarily the reviews themselves but some relation between the two?

Mr. Reynolds: I don't understand. Sorry, Mr. Chair; this is a question-and-answer thing. What two reviews do you mean?

Mr. Horne: The administrative review. I believe that that one was requested by the House leaders.

Mr. Reynolds: Well, no. As we said before, there was something circulated amongst House leaders when we were discussing this, the Speaker and I. Yes, there was something by House leaders about an administrative review, but I'm not sure if you're referring to the review that appears to be on the table here, about the rules that I was speaking of about the Members' Services Committee and your role in exercising governance over this.

Mr. Horne: My understanding is that there would be two separate reviews, one administrative and one . . .

The Chair: Let's be clear. You're correct. There are two. No. Excuse me. At this stage there's one. The one that we started discussing back very early this year: that is in progress, as I said earlier. You're going to have all MLAs. All caucuses are going to have significant involvement and direction on that.

Now, the second issue is an option. The option rests with the committee: the rules, the standing orders, the guidelines that have been in place. I'm suggesting that there is an opportunity, as Rob describes, on the governance questions. What do you want to have changed? What are the directions that you want to go in? That's going to involve also a dialogue with all of the members but quite distinct and separate from the administrative review.

Does that help, Trevor?

Mr. Horne: It does, yes.

I'm not sure if anybody else is on the speakers list.

The Chair: No, they're not. None yet.

Mr. Horne: Okay. Now, I've looked at a few system reviews before, and it's not entirely uncommon that they put forward a recommendation on the governance of it, the guidelines or what have you. I'm not entirely certain if it's best to have them running at the same time although I do see them as being related.

Mr. Reynolds: Yes, Mr. Horne, it's difficult, I agree, not to see an interrelationship. The rules are interpreted, so if the rules change, which is what we're suggesting – if people don't like the way things are, maybe the rules could change, right? How these things are administered and the decisions that are made are a result of the rules. I would suggest that perhaps one might want to consider a different causal effect. I mean, perhaps that's not your view.

Mr. Horne: I certainly see that I would agree. I agree with the need for a review. I'm just concerned about the timeline of these two.

The Chair: Let me try. Again, it's open for discussion to the table, but it's really up to the committee. How soon does the committee wish to get the rules changed? That option rests with the committee. It's up to you. If we're going to do the system review and the system plan for the future, I would urge that all members, all MLAs, look again.

It's like the ship: in which direction do you want to go on the governance question? I don't see that those two systems couldn't be going on in parallel, but it's not urgent. We're going to do the administrative review and look at new systems, and the systems will be driven in part by what direction, what sort of changes you think need to happen.

The second question is: what do you want the rules to be? I'm suggesting it's a good opportunity to do it in parallel, but it doesn't have to be. If the committee chooses that we wait till something else happens, it's up to you. It's up to the majority of the committee that's here. I leave that to you.

1:20

Mr. Horne: Thank you for clarifying. Personally, my feeling is that it might be more prudent to do the systems review first and find out what's not working. It's entirely possible it could come back and say: "You know, there's some uncertainty in the administration around this particular point. Perhaps that needs more clarity." That's something that I would not be surprised to find. Personally, I feel that it might be a bit more prudent, if we're doing a review of the guidelines, to wait until we have the systems review.

The Chair: I just want to make one point clear, and then I have Ms Jabbour. We're not looking at the guidelines versus the systems and processes. The guidelines, really, are in the governance perspective of the direction. The systems are more on the administrative side. So I want to make sure that we're on the same page on your question. Debbie.

Ms Jabbour: Yeah. I just want to comment that I sense, I think, where you're going, that the two can occur together without one necessarily impacting the other. I think the concern is that we just want to make sure that nothing is delayed inappropriately. But I do think, from how I understand the motion that's coming up, we're being given three options that we want to look at: do we advocate for a full, extensive review or a partial review or a specific review? Am I understanding that correctly? The will of the committee you're looking for is which one of those options we might go forward with?

The Chair: I think the recommendation was that they look at a subcommittee under option 3. The subcommittee, I think, is the best way to do this, but again it's the will of the committee as to how you want to do it. Now, maybe you're addressing the breadth of the review?

Ms Jabbour: Perhaps. I just wanted to understand what we're actually deciding on, if we want to do a full review or a smaller review. I agree; I think the subcommittee makes sense.

I just wanted to comment that I think that now is a particularly good time to do that because when you've got 72 new members coming in and we're faced with all of these different guidelines and things, I think we're seeing them in a totally different, new light, where they might not have been looked at that way previously because they'd been in place for a while and the same members were accessing them. I think we're seeing some different things, so I think it's a good time for the review, and I'd be completely in favour of that however the committee decides, like, on the extent of it.

The Chair: Yeah. So the question on if you do, you know, 1, 2, or 3 is on the depth and expanse. Again, that's to the committee's direction.

Are there any other members who would like to speak to this matter? Nathan.

Mr. Cooper: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I think that doing a review in conjunction with the other work that's going on isn't a challenge. You know, significant sections of the guidelines haven't been reviewed since '92. It seems reasonable that we get some work done on that file.

The Chair: To the same point, again, you know, we all know around this table that time goes by fast around here. If you want to make some changes, it seems to me that the committee may want to start looking at that sooner or later because once you start getting into the detail, it might be very time consuming. Certainly, the reason it's here is to give you that opportunity to start the process because it may be some time before the final recommendations on the changes come back. My perspective as the neutral chair is that you may want to get started on that into the future right away. What's the will of the committee?

Mr. Reynolds: Sorry, Mr. Speaker. I just want to provide an example here. Mr. Horne, I'm not sure if this is your thought, but as to the distinction between the two, yeah, there's a review going on the processes used by, you know, the LAO and FMAS in particular. But let's say that you look at the communication allowance orders concerning constituency offices. It says, "An item may not be paid for under subsection (1) if it bears any political party logo, promotes political party activities, solicits political party funds or memberships or contains personal criticism of another Member." That's one of the rules that's applied.

If you think that's unfair or you reject it on that basis, what I'd say is that you're the only ones who could change that rule, not us. I mean, I think that in looking at that rule, for instance, it would not have a lot to do with a process review of what FMAS does. But I'm just pointing that out as an example as to what, you know, members can do. Anyway, that was just an example I had in mind.

The Chair: That's the first time I've been amongst this group that you didn't have anything to say. Is there any will if I were to suggest a motion?

Debbie.

Ms Jabbour: Yeah. I was just going to suggest I could put forward a motion. I guess it would need to come from a member rather than the chair. If I put forward a motion that the Members' Services Committee strike a subcommittee to consider the process of undergoing an extensive review of all orders, would that cover it? Is that too extensive, too much?

The Chair: Try one more time. If you could say that again.

Ms Jabbour: That's option 1.

Just going to option 3, that one I'm having some difficulty with because, to me, that says that we've got to identify areas of concern. I'm not sure we're really at that point. I think we just have to look at all of it before we can really pick out bits and pieces.

The Chair: So the intent of the motion, then, is that the Members' Services Committee establish a subcommittee to do a full and extensive review of all orders and guidelines.

Ms Jabbour: That's what I'm suggesting would be good.

Mr. Reynolds: The Members' Services Committee.

The Chair: Yeah, the Members' Services Committee. What's the will of the committee? Nathan.

Mr. Cooper: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. You know, I certainly don't have any significant challenge with the motion. I think an extensive review is a good idea. However, I would like to probably propose a bit of a subamendment that would include

removing any review of member compensation, so it would take out the sections around wages of members and benefits for members.

I know it's hard to believe that I don't have a copy of the Members' Services guidelines in front of me, but if we could remove those sections, then I certainly could support a full, extensive review of all the orders with the exception of the compensation orders.

The Chair: Debbie.

Ms Jabbour: Yeah. I think I would take that as a friendly amendment. I'm just wondering, though, if we're going to get into trouble trying to do that at this level because I think we don't necessarily know which ones we're referring to. I mean, we did previously pass a motion dealing with compensation saying that we're not going to touch it, that it's frozen. I just don't know if that's the best way to do it, by that motion.

The Chair: So are you going to consider that as a friendly amendment?

1:30

Ms Jabbour: Yeah, I could take it as a friendly amendment. I just – we've got to make sure that the wording is not so specific that . . .

The Chair: It's limiting.

Ms Jabbour: . . . it limits us in a way that we might have trouble with later. Could we maybe word it that the review would not interfere with the previous motion passed by the Members' Services Committee regarding members' compensation, whatever date that would have been? We can't do that?

Mr. Reynolds: I think that, if I get you right, the previous motion you're referring to would be the motion to freeze the increase in members' salaries.

Ms Jabbour: Uh-huh.

Mr. Reynolds: Yes. There is nothing that precludes Members' Services from looking at the issue. Again, I mean, they have a freeze in place, but it's my sense that there are certain orders that you would want to look at. I'm not sure that the pay issue is one of them, but I may be wrong. It's like – we were talking about insurance, life insurance, and group plans earlier today. I'm not sure. I know that that wasn't really what we had in mind; perhaps it's what you had in mind. I don't know.

Ms Jabbour: Well, that's exactly what I was thinking. We talked about that piece, and if we preclude that and we say, "Well, we can't consider that or look at it," that's not necessarily helping us.

Mr. McIver: Well, having listened to this, I think that what Mr. Cooper brought forward was quite a bit different than just saying, "Honour the previous motion," because what it leaves it open to – the previous motion to freeze members' compensation, I think, was unanimously supported in the House. I could be wrong, but I think so. If we get into that conversation, members of the public will justifiably wonder, based on the outside date of the previous motion, whether the committee will be coming back for a big raise for MLAs the day after, which, of course, if we do it the day after the previous motion, wouldn't be interfering with the previous motion. So you can just see how that will be perceived quite a bit

differently by the public. I don't think my constituents, many of whom are out of work now and weren't out of work a year and a half ago, are all that anxious to have us talking about our own paycheques.

So I think that giving them the assurance that we won't be talking about our own paycheques – I see that as a positive thing, which is why I think that the motion to take that right off the table in a very direct way is something that the public would view as a positive thing. Now, the public could say, too, that we could give ourselves a big pay cut. But I don't think anybody out there in Alberta land believes we're going to do that. So if we just take it right off the table, I think that will give them the best assurance that we can give them that we won't be talking about our paycheques when so many of our constituents are out of work.

The Chair: I'm going to test for clarity. Karen has just tried a motion which I think captures the intent. Moved by Ms Jabbour that the Members' Services Committee strike a subcommittee to conduct an extensive review of all orders of the Legislative Assembly but not include any review of members' compensation, including benefits.

Is there an agreement on that?

Mr. Cooper: Can you read it again?

The Chair: Karen, you go ahead.

Mrs. Sawchuk: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Moved that the Members' Services Committee strike a subcommittee to conduct an extensive review of all Members' Services Committee orders . . .

Mr. Reynolds: Sorry. Did you say "extensive" in your motion?

Ms Sawchuk: That was Ms Jabbour's.

Mr. Reynolds: She said "extensive"?

The Chair: Yeah.

Mr. Reynolds: Oh. Okay.

Ms Sawchuk: . . . but not include any review of members' compensation, including benefits.

Mr. S. Anderson: Just because we were talking about the audit before, would it be good in this motion to add in that the subcommittee wouldn't be making, I guess, a decision until after that FMAS audit is in so that information is – because it could shed some light on something. I'm just asking . . .

Mr. Reynolds: Just for clarification, there's no audit. It's not an audit that's going on.

Mr. S. Anderson: Sorry. Wrong word.

Mr. Reynolds: We have the Auditor General, who performs an audit every single year of our operation. The Auditor General specifically looks at FMAS and has found absolutely nothing wrong and has been very complimentary. So, I mean, unless you know of something like fraud that you're alleging . . .

Mr. S. Anderson: No. I just meant the review. I didn't mean that word. Wrong wording. That's all I meant. If there is that review that's going on . . .

The Chair: The subcommittee and this committee would determine the pace reporting back. I don't see that as an impairment.

Mr. S. Anderson: Yeah. I just thought that if there was some information that came out from that, that would be beneficial for this review; that is all.

The Chair: Do you want to try it again, Karen?

Mr. S. Anderson: Okay. That's fine.

The Chair: You've got it. You've got an agreement?

Mr. S. Anderson: I was just curious.

The Chair: Do you want to read it back one more time?

Mrs. Sawchuk: Moved that the Members' Services Committee strike a subcommittee to conduct an extensive review of all Members' Services Committee orders but not include any review of members' compensation, including benefits.

The Chair: All in favour of the motion, please say aye. Those opposed, please say no. The motion is carried.

Could we go back to the agenda?

I'm sorry. The subcommittee makeup: how would you like to determine that? There is a suggestion that it be all-party because it is a service to the MLAs. What's your wish? We have a motion here. Do you want to go, Nathan?

Mr. Cooper: Yeah. I just wanted to support your position that all-party does seem to be relatively important.

The Chair: Yeah. This was suggested, that the subcommittee for the review – da, da, da, da – be comprised of the following members: three New Democrat members, one Wildrose, and one PC and that the subcommittee report back to the Members' Services Committee.

Mr. Cooper: Does the Speaker chair the subcommittee, or would there be an additional chair of the subcommittee?

The Chair: I didn't intend to be in the chair. I think the committee would determine its chair. Again, it's at your direction, what this subcommittee does.

My experience, limited as it is, is that subcommittees, unless there is explicit direction, usually determine their chairmanship, but I may be wrong in that assumption.

Mr. Cooper: No. That's all right. I was just curious.

The Chair: Okay. To the clerk's question, is someone prepared to move . . .

Mr. Cooper: One second, just before we go on.

The Chair: Yes?

Mr. Cooper: Would it be possible – and I don't know if it matters or not to my hon. colleague from the third party – if they wanted to appoint someone that wasn't on Members' Services . . .

Mr. McIver: It's not doable. It's in the standing orders.

Mr. Cooper: It's not? Oh, that's sucky for you.

Mr. McIver: Subcommittee appointments have to be from the committee, if I understand correctly. If somebody tells me that I'm wrong, I'm happy to listen to it, but I think I asked that question once before, and it was made quite clear to me that subcommittee members must be on the committee.

Mr. Cooper: Do you want to be on a committee, Ric?

Mr. McIver: I do my work, my friend.

Ms Luff: That's potentially one of the areas we need to look at.

The Chair: Is someone prepared to make that a motion?

Mr. Cooper: The subcommittee makeup motion, you mean?

Mr. McIver: Certainly, the mover is going to be on it.

The Chair: Who are your members?

1:40

Ms Jabbour: You want somebody to make a motion to name all five members? I'll go ahead and do that. I'm just kidding.

The Chair: I presumed that what we were doing – well, if it's got to be the subcommittee . . .

Mr. McIver: The three, one, and one motion is what we're looking at.

Ms Jabbour: You're looking for a motion that the committee would be comprised of that, the five. Okay. I can do that. I move that

the Members' Services Committee appoint a subcommittee to review orders that would be comprised of three ND caucus members, one PC member, and one Wildrose member.

Does that cover it?

Mr. Reynolds: You have to name them. Sorry.

Ms Jabbour: So I've got to name them in advance?

Ms Luff: My only issue with that is that we have some members who are not here today who are on this committee who might want to be on the subcommittee, and it might be pertinent to talk to them first. That's my only concern there.

Mr. Cooper: Mr. Speaker, I certainly would prefer that caucuses could determine their membership on the subcommittee. I don't know if there are the parameters or the latitude to allow that to happen, but perhaps we could provide written notification to the Speaker prior to 30 days.

The Chair: A week's time? Is that agreeable?

Some Hon. Members: Yes.

The Chair: The motion would then be to accept Ms Jabbour's motion without names and that you'll advise the Speaker within one week's time. Agreed?

Mr. McIver: Mr. Speaker?

The Chair: Yes, Mr. McIver.

Mr. McIver: I can advise today. Since our party is allowed one person and it can't be anybody else, is it okay if you consider yourself apprised based on that logic?

The Chair: Yeah. Just don't forget to put it in the notes.

All in favour, say aye. All opposed, say no. Now I think we have a motion carried.

Item 5(f), rental vehicles. Ms Jabbour.

Ms Jabbour: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I brought this discussion to this committee as it's something that I've come up against almost right from the beginning. I'm not sure if it's unique to me just because of my particular set of circumstances – I have a sense that it might be – but there may be other members who have run into the problem or others who will.

We have a limitation that you can only have five days of rental if you're not renting in Edmonton or Calgary. What happens with me: I used up my five days, like, almost right away because I often find that I'm having to jump around for very short periods of time. My schedule often changes very rapidly, as does everybody's. We've got very limited flights on certain days, so sometimes I have no choice but to drive. When I only had one vehicle, I would drive. I'd be in Edmonton with my vehicle, but I'd have to go back to my constituency for a day or two days very quickly. My most efficient way of doing that, the most cost-effective way, might be to fly back. I would do that, and then I'd need to rent a vehicle. But under those kinds of circumstances the five days goes very quickly.

Now I've got a second vehicle, that I leave up north, but I've got two airports. Right now my vehicle is in High Level. I need to be in Peace River next. So I have to fly up to High Level, drive to Peace River, and then drive back to High Level to take the plane, or I've got to figure out a way to do that because I have no option to rent a vehicle when I'm going to be there for only a couple of days because I've used up my five days.

Again, I'm always looking for the most cost-effective way to do this, so any time I plan my travel, I look at the cost of flights, I look at when, and the whens – I also have to weigh my time: eight hours in a vehicle there and back. When we're in caucus, I've only got three days to do that. So that's a big chunk of my time.

You know, I'm playing with all of these factors and thinking: is five days reasonable, or could we have a little bit of leeway on that? Does it make sense? Now, there may be a very good rationale for limiting it to five days, and I've asked everybody. I've asked everybody in Finance, and nobody has explained it yet. So if they can explain it to me, I'm fine with that. That makes sense, too. But I just wanted to have a discussion. Is there maybe a more flexible way to do this that would give a few more options and, you know, just make it easier for members like myself who have long distances and some of those kinds of challenges?

As I say, I just wanted to put it on the table.

Mr. Nixon: Would we be able to discuss – I actually have a question just on process, on how it works, because I don't know. I do sympathize with the Deputy Speaker. I have a big riding, not nearly as big as hers or as isolated, so I get the unique circumstances. So if a member is driving a rental car, can they still charge kilometres and fuel while driving that rental car? Well, "charge" is the wrong word, but expense.

Mr. Ellis: If I heard you correctly, Mr. Nixon, you're asking if they can rent a car and charge mileage on the rental car?

Mr. Nixon: I'm asking: if they were not charging for the expense of the rental, so they were renting the car, would they still be able then to expense kilometres and fuel while they were driving? Does it have to be their own car? That's what I'm asking. Do they have to have it registered? Do they have to own it? Like, I get the unique circumstances, but I'm trying to ask if we already have a system in place to deal with it, quite frankly.

Mr. Ellis: This is one of those things that we've just been talking about in terms of clarity of the orders. I believe the order, which is a transportation allowances order, specifies – let me get the right section here. Bear with me.

Automobile Travel Allowance for Member's Own Vehicle
There's the title of it right there.

(5) The following shall be provided to or for the use of Members on the condition that they are related to and reasonably necessary for the performance of their duties as Members . . .

(b) a per kilometre allowance . . . in respect of a Member's use of a private automobile on the following conditions:

(i) the purpose of an allowance is to cover the expenses of [the automobile operating costs] . . . and

(ii) the allowance is limited to payment for up to 52 trips . . .

et cetera.

So we've got personal auto in one paragraph, with respect to that order, and a title that says: Member's Own Vehicle. My definition would be that it's their personal vehicle; however, others may feel differently about that.

Mr. Nixon: I guess, for me, Mr. Speaker, you know, if a member had been involved in a car accident or some other circumstance that required them to drive a rental car for a period of time, now you're – I take the point that this falls a little bit under how we previously discussed it. I do sympathize with the circumstance, but to me maybe it's just simply: how do we make it so that you can, you know – I don't care whose car the Deputy Speaker is driving at the time. As long as she's incurring the expense, obviously, of the circumstance, then we want to make sure she's compensated. Or any member.

The Chair: Mr. McIver.

Mr. McIver: Yeah. I started out and I saw this and I started listening to the discussion thinking that we're solving a problem that doesn't exist. Then I listened to Ms Jabbour, and I learned that there is a problem that exists; it just doesn't exist for me. So there are clearly some members we need to consider differently. I think the basic rule is that – well, I think one of two things. I guess I would ask Ms Jabbour: could we roll this into the review of Members' Services? Or if you need it solved faster than that, then we've got to horse around on the floor of the committee here, which I'm willing to do if it's important. No, I don't want to see you stuck and all that kind of stuff. We have to have a little bit of respect for each other in allowing our fellow MLAs to do their jobs.

So if Ms Jabbour could wait till we do the Members' Services review, then I would recommend that it get rolled into there. If it's something that is going to be troublesome for her between now and then and she needs some kind of a solution, I would be willing to entertain, you know, an exception to the rules for MLAs that have ridings where it's not practical. At some point we'd probably want to survey members and just name those ridings where it's not practical and give them an exemption to the rule.

But I'd be interested to hear what Ms Jabbour has to say about that. I don't want to see her stuck. On the other hand, if she can relatively comfortably wait for the rest of the process, then that would be okay, too. Again, when you decide it's time, Mr. Speaker, I'd be happy to hear from Ms Jabbour again on this.

The Chair: Just hold on a second.

Debbie, go ahead.

1:50

Ms Jabbour: Well, I think it definitely makes sense to put it as part of the larger review, for sure, to kind of look at it more comprehensively. I think the comment that Mr. Nixon brings up is interesting. I mean, the fleet vehicles are leased vehicles, technically, but

they're considered our vehicles, but we don't count mileage on them, so that could be another one of those little grey areas. I don't know. I'm not sure if that's the best solution.

I did want to comment that I know that there are some concerns about cost implications and budgetary things, but I forgot to mention that earlier in the spring I thought: "I'll try it differently. I'll leave my car in the north, and I'll fly to Edmonton and rent a vehicle from Edmonton because I have unlimited rentals in Edmonton." I could still do that. I mean, to me, that would cost more in the long run, so I'm not sure that there are major budgetary differences. It would just be how it would be structured, and I don't find that a very convenient way of doing it either. I'm quite open to leaving it. I mean, we're already well into this budget year, and I'm happy to wait for the review and we do it properly. You know, if the committee feels that it's a worthwhile thing to look at it that way, I'm good with it.

The Chair: Mr. Clerk.

Mr. Reynolds: Sorry. Following up on Mr. Nixon's question – something one shouldn't do is think out loud, really, but in any event it did spark something. When you read the transcript, you can beat me over the head with it. If there was a provision that a rent-a-car in a member's – if a member rents a car in the member's constituency to perform MLA duties, perform constituency work, the member can claim it as if it was a personal vehicle, and then you would get mileage. Now, if that's agreeable – because it would cut in, perhaps, to what the rent-a-car cost is, but you would be subsidized. The only thing I'm saying there is that it then would be rolled into this larger review in the sense that, you know, maybe the review could look at whether five rentals is a good number, 10 or 25 or whatever. I'm just wondering if that would help you out. It would go to your overall mileage total, but it shouldn't affect any budgets, then – Scott? – because that money is already allocated, right? Usually Scott doesn't agree with me.

The Chair: I don't know if that's good or bad.

Mr. Ellis: Yeah, that's true. Yeah.

Mr. Reynolds: Would that be a temporary solution that we could look at for a change in the orders?

The Chair: This is just, thus, Trevor, to our discussion earlier, one classic, small example of why the committee may want to look at these in greater detail.

Is there a way, Mr. Clerk, of formalizing your suggestion if the committee was so inclined?

Mr. Reynolds: The understanding would be that essentially – I mean, you don't have to say that it's an interim order because they're all interim to the extent that MSC may decide to change it. Unfortunately, this is the last item on the agenda, so time is rather limited right now.

Ms Jabbour: We have all day tomorrow if we wanted to discuss it.

Mr. Reynolds: Yes. It doesn't allow you to go back to your constituency, though, even if you don't have a car.

Mr. Speaker, if we could just have perhaps two minutes.

The Chair: Okay, folks. Can we recess for two minutes?

[The committee adjourned from 1:54 p.m. to 2:09 p.m.]

The Chair: Well, welcome back.

I believe we may have a consensus on an action item, at least on an interim basis. Debbie, would you like to try that?

Ms Jabbour: Karen will read the actual motion, but I think that when you hear the motion read, you'll understand that it's not going to have any cost implications whatsoever. It doesn't change anything. It simply allows your rental vehicle to be included under your own personal mileage, that you're already entitled to.

Mrs. Sawchuk: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The motion by Ms Jabbour is to move that

the transportation order be amended in section 5 by renumbering section 5 as 5(1) and adding the following after subsection (1):

(2) For the purposes of this section and section 6, "private automobile" includes an automobile rented by a member but does not include a rental under section 1(c) and (c.1).

The Chair: All in favour of the motion, please say aye. All opposed, say no. The motion is carried.

I'll seek some guidance from the Clerk as well as the committee on a date when we might have a follow-up meeting. What do you think, Rob?

Mr. Reynolds: Do you want it before session?

The Chair: Yeah. I think we should have one before session. The subcommittee on family issues will be ready. There may well be some other stuff as well. If people could just check their schedules. How about the week of October 24, with possibilities of the 25th or 26th?

Mr. McIver: Are we pretty sure the House won't be sitting then?

The Chair: I would be purely speculative. I don't know.

What if we said the 25th, 9 a.m.? What time works? At 9:30? I'm hearing 9:30. How many would go for 9:30? So the next meeting will be in this room at 9:30 a.m. on October 25, 2016. To what time?

An Hon. Member: Four o'clock.

The Chair: Four?

Mr. Cooper: Well, just in case. We can always adjourn early.

The Chair: You may want to move that. There is an event that many members might be wishing to attend that afternoon at 4, yet to be confirmed. You may want to leave it at 3:30 instead.

For the record I know you all want to stay, but tomorrow's scheduled meeting is now cancelled. Damn it.

Do we need a motion for adjournment?

Mr. Cooper: So moved.

The Chair: Mr. Cooper. All those in favour, say aye. Opposed, say no. The motion is carried. Thank you.

[The committee adjourned at 2:14 p.m.]

