



Legislative Assembly of Alberta

The 31st Legislature
First Session

Special Standing Committee
on
Members' Services

Monday, April 14, 2025
9 a.m.

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Special Standing Committee on Members' Services

Cooper, Hon. Nathan M., Olds-Didsbury-Three Hills (UC), Chair
Getson, Shane C., Lac Ste. Anne-Parkland (UC), Deputy Chair

Dyck, Nolan B., Grande Prairie (UC)*
Eggen, David, Edmonton-North West (NDP)
Gray, Christina, Edmonton-Mill Woods (NDP)
Hunter, Grant R., Taber-Warner (UC)
Metz, Luanne, Calgary-Varsity (NDP)
Petrovic, Chelsae, Livingstone-Macleod (UC)
Sabir, Irfan, Calgary-Bhullar-McCall (NDP)
Singh, Peter, Calgary-East (UC)
Yao, Tany, Fort McMurray-Wood Buffalo (UC)

* substitution for Tany Yao

Also in Attendance

Lunty, Brandon G., Leduc-Beaumont (UC)

Support Staff

Shannon Dean, KC	Clerk
Ketsa, Tammy	Executive Assistant to the Clerk
Trafton Koenig	Law Clerk
Lianne Bell	Chief of Staff to the Speaker
Aaron Roth	Committee Clerk
Terry Langley	Sergeant-at-Arms
Dave Ludwick	Executive Director of Corporate Services
Darren Joy	Senior Financial Officer
Lyndsay Tischer	Director of Human Resources
Amanda LeBlanc	Managing Editor of <i>Alberta Hansard</i>

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[Mr. Cooper in the chair]

The Chair: Good morning, members. Welcome. I'd like to call this meeting to order.

My name is Nathan Cooper. I'm the MLA for the outstanding constituency of Olds-Didsbury-Three Hills and the chair of this committee. I'd like to have members introduce themselves for the record. First, I'll call upon members here in the committee room, and then I will have those joining us online introduce themselves, starting to my right with the committee clerk.

Mr. Roth: Good morning. Aaron Roth, committee clerk.

Mr. Getson: Morning. Shane Getson, MLA, Lac Ste. Anne-Parkland.

Mr. Hunter: Grant Hunter, Taber-Warner.

Mrs. Petrovic: Chelsae Petrovic, Livingstone-Macleod.

Mr. Lundy: Good morning. Brandon Lundy, Leduc-Beaumont.

Mr. Langley: Good morning. Terry Langley, Sergeant-at-Arms.

Mr. Sabir: Good morning. Irfan Sabir, MLA for the most diverse and vibrant constituency of Calgary-Bhullar-McCall.

Dr. Metz: Luanne Metz, MLA for Calgary-Varsity.

Mr. Eggen: Dave Eggen, MLA for Edmonton-North West.

Ms Gray: Good morning. Christina Gray, MLA for Edmonton-Mill Woods.

Ms Tischer: Good morning. Lyndsay Tischer, director of HR for the Legislative Assembly Office.

Dr. Ludwick: Dave Ludwick, corporate services.

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

Ms Dean: Shannon Dean, Clerk.

The Chair: Mr. Singh.

Mr. Singh: Good morning, everyone. Peter Singh, MLA, Calgary-East.

The Chair: Excellent. Thank you all very much.

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With that said, I'd like to move to item 2, the approval of the agenda. Are there any proposed additions or revisions to today's meeting agenda? Seeing none, I am prepared to entertain a motion. Member Getson. All those in favour of the approval of the agenda, please say aye. Any opposed, please say no. Joining us remotely, please say aye. That motion is carried and so ordered.

Three, the approval of the meeting minutes. Are there any amendments to the minutes from our last meeting? If not, would a member of the committee move, please? Member Eggen moves the approval of the meeting minutes. Any discussion? Seeing and hearing none, all those in favour here in the room of the approval of the minutes, please say aye. Any opposed, please say no. Joining us remotely, please say aye. Any opposed? That motion is carried and so ordered.

Just prior to proceeding, I do for the record have an official substitution: Member Dyck for Member Yao. I'll just ask him to introduce himself for the purposes of the record.

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

The Chair: Excellent. Thank you, Member Dyck.

We are on item 4. On March 24, 2025, I advised the Legislative Assembly that I'd be calling a meeting of this committee to discuss the matter of complaints between members, specifically as it relates to a member-to-member workplace interaction policy. This follows a number of events that have transpired in and around the Assembly, and I am of the opinion that our Assembly would be well served by discussing the possibility of a member-to-member workplace interaction policy.

Hon. members will note that in the 29th Assembly a subcommittee of this committee was struck to have a discussion; however, those discussions were never concluded. I'm of the opinion that our committee would be well served for a subcommittee to develop potential proposals or a policy discussion based upon workplace interactions as some other Assemblies or the House of Commons has across the country. I know that we have had some discussions prior to this meeting, and there may be some agreement for a subcommittee, but I am happy to have a discussion about that now. Is there anyone who'd like to provide some comments on the record or perhaps move a motion for a subcommittee?

Mr. Getson: Mr. Speaker, I think we've had a few conversations outside of here, as you've alluded to. I believe at this time I'm good to move a motion if everyone is amenable to that, to go through that. If I may, I believe it was presented, and it should be on screen there as well.

The Chair: We'll get it up on the screen here before you proceed, Member Getson. If you wouldn't mind beginning your remarks by reading the motion into the record.

Mr. Getson: Sure. Moved by MLA Shane Getson that the Special Standing Committee on Members' Services establish a subcommittee to be referred to as a respectful workplace policy review subcommittee as follows. (A) The subcommittee shall be comprised of the hon. Nathan Cooper, chair of the committee, as chair of the subcommittee;

The second part is:

- (1) two members of the committee shall be nominated by the government caucus, and (2) two members of the committee nominated by the Official Opposition;
- (B) The members referred to in clause (A)(1) and (A)(2) must be nominated on or before April 30, 2025;
- (C) The mandate of the subcommittee shall be to consider the matter of policy to address respectful workplace complaints between Members of the Legislative Assembly;
- (D) Carrying out its mandate, the subcommittee may utilize the services of employees of the Legislative Assembly;
- (E) The quorum of the meeting of the subcommittee is three members, a minimum of one member from each caucus, and a member of the subcommittee may substitute for a member of the subcommittee at the meeting provided that notice of the substitution is provided to the committee clerk before the subcommittee meeting commences.

The Chair: Member Gray.

Ms Gray: Thank you very much, Mr. Chair. Looking at this motion, I certainly just want to reflect that there have been really good conversations behind the scenes between the House teams of the government and the Official Opposition caucus. I think having a respectful workplace policy review subcommittee to begin some conversations about a potential policy is a really good next step. While that subcommittee is operating, certainly the Official Opposition House team will continue to work with the Government House team if there are any issues or any items that need to be discussed, but I think this is a good motion. I think it's a good next step to have this important conversation. I agree with the Speaker that our Assembly would be well served to examine this more closely.

The Chair: Excellent. Thank you very much. I know that on occasion people outside of this place make the accusation that you guys never work together on anything. Now, look, here today there is, I think, some widespread agreement on such policy.

Are there any other questions, comments, concerns, or need for discussion? Member Sabir.

Mr. Sabir: Yeah. I do have concern with how this motion is numbered, a minor one: 1, 2.2, 3.2, and then 2. I'm trying to make sense how that was numbered.

Mr. Roth: It's the template that it's presented – I don't know that I can fix it.

The Chair: The actual motion will appear in the minutes: (A) The subcommittee shall be comprised of and then point 1, 2, 3 or i, ii, iii; (B); (C); (D); (E) is how it will be in the minutes, if the member is satisfied with that.

Mr. Sabir: Yes.

The Chair: Okay. Excellent.

I will call the question then unless there's further debate. Hon. members, on the motion as proposed by Member Getson, all those in favour, please say aye. Any opposed, please say no. Joining us remotely, please say aye. Any opposed?

That motion is carried and so ordered.

9:10

Perhaps, Ms Gray and Member Getson, if either of you can pass your nominated members of the committee through to Aaron before the 30th. I'm sure, if he has failed to receive them by the 29th, he'll provide a reminder to you.

Hon. members, that brings us to item 5, amendment to the constituency services order. On the 12th of March I sent a letter to each of the caucus whips raising the issue of purchasing tables at an event using your members' services allowances. The constituency service order does not provide a great deal of clarity in this respect, and I am suggesting an amendment that could be brought forward to this committee for its consideration. A briefing note and a draft proposed amendment to the constituency services order was posted to the committee internal website for review by committee members on April 10. The draft order would amend section 5.1 of the constituency services order to allow members to pay for the cost of a table at an event for the member and the member's guest once per fiscal year.

In order to be eligible for payment from the MSA, certain criteria must also be met. The member must be in attendance at the event in the role as a member as a representative of their constituency. The event must be held in Alberta, the total number of tickets must not exceed the one table of seated attendees, and the total cost of the tickets must not exceed \$1,000. The draft order also requires the total cost of all tickets to an event over \$100 be included in the

member's quarterly expense disclosure report if that expense is paid for or reimbursed by the member's services allowance.

Hon. members, as my letter of March 12 described, there is some lack of clarity in the constituency services order. We have been applying the rule as described in the proposed amendment based upon the approval of the committee. Largely, this is when members of the Assembly would like to purchase a table predominantly at nonprofit or charitable organizations. I would describe them as the address to the city or the state of the city that the mayor of Edmonton holds on occasion, where the event may not be physically located inside the constituency of the member but it very clearly makes sense for a member to be able to attend and potentially have a table at that.

Unless there is significant discussion, I am prepared to move forward. Are there comments, questions, concerns from either side? Ms Gray.

Ms Gray: Not a concern with this proposed policy but just a question as far as: how much, if any, will the public reporting on our expense disclosures need to be updated to reflect this? It shows 10 events right now, I think. Will it show whether this one event has been used, like, this one special circumstance in the disclosure reporting?

The Chair: I will confirm for you, but for my opinion in terms of transparency the most important part of the reporting will be in your quarterly report that is published, for example reimbursements around hotel stays. What are the other things that are . . .

Dr. Ludwick: Mileage.

The Chair: Mileage and other places where . . . [interjection] Hosting. Oh, sorry. As well as in, like, your hosting expenses that are published and posted on your quarterly reports, so, too, will tickets purchased over \$100, if that makes sense. I'll confirm for you about whether or not your annual table has been used, but as you know, we are transitioning in the short term to a brand new report anyway through the ERP program, so your report is going to look significantly different in the medium term anyway.

Go ahead.

Ms Gray: The changes to that report: I'm just curious if this committee will have a chance to review that before it goes live, or will that happen . . .

The Chair: ERP?

Ms Gray: Yeah, just what that report looks like.

The Chair: Yeah. We'll have some discussion. On the 9th of May there's an information session for all members about the proposed changes and how the ERP rollout is going to look and work. The LAO has sent an invite and a notice to members, who I'm sure have already updated their calendars and are waiting with bated breath.

Ms Gray: Yes. I knew about that meeting and was testing you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you. That makes perfect sense.

The Chair: Excellent.

Let's get the proposed change up on the screen. Okay. Member Hunter, are you prepared to make that motion?

Mr. Hunter: Moved by MLA Grant Hunter that the Special Standing Committee on Members' Services approve the draft Constituency Services Amendment Order, 2025 (No. 2) as distributed.

The Chair: Hon. members, any other questions, comments, concerns?

Having heard the motion as proposed by the hon. Member Hunter, all those in favour, please say aye. Any opposed, please say no. Joining us virtually, please say aye. Any opposed?

That motion is carried and so ordered.

Hon. members, that brings us to other business, of which there is none. The next meeting will be at the call of the chair, and I will entertain a motion to adjourn.

Dr. Metz: I make a motion that we adjourn.

The Chair: All those in favour, please say aye. Any opposed, please say no. In my opinion the ayes have it. We are adjourned.

[The committee adjourned at 9:17 a.m.]

