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Standing Committee
on
Public Accounts

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6:18 p.m.

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[Mr. Cyr in the chair]

The Chair: Good evening. I'd like to call this meeting of the Public Accounts Committee to order and welcome everyone who is in attendance.

My name is Scott Cyr. I'm the MLA for Bonnyville-Cold Lake and chair of the Public Accounts Committee. I'd like to ask the attendees at the table to introduce themselves for the record, starting on my right.

Mr. Dach: Evening. Lorne Dach, MLA, Edmonton-McClung, deputy chair.

Mr. Panda: Yeah. Good evening. Prasad Panda, MLA, Calgary-Foothills.

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

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

Mr. McIver: Ric McIver, MLA, Calgary-Hays, substituting for Drew Barnes.

Mr. Clark: Good evening. Wonderful to see everyone. It is Greg Clark, MLA for Calgary-Elbow.

Mr. Wylie: Doug Wylie with the office of the Auditor General.

Ms Renaud: Marie Renaud, St. Albert.

Mr. Piquette: Good evening. Colin Piquette, MLA for Athabasca-Sturgeon-Redwater, substituting for MLA Littlewood.

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

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

Mr. Carson: Good evening. Jon Carson, MLA for Edmonton-Meadowlark.

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

Mr. Nielsen: Good evening, everyone. Chris Nielsen, MLA for Edmonton-Decore.

Dr. Turner: Bob Turner, Edmonton-Whitemud.

Dr. Massolin: Hello. Philip Massolin, manager of research and committee services.

Mrs. Sawchuk: Karen Sawchuk, committee clerk.

The Chair: Thank you.

I'd like to note for the record the following substitutions: Mr. McIver for Mr. Barnes, Mr. Piquette for Mrs. Littlewood.

I have a few housekeeping items to address as well. Please note that the microphones are operated by *Hansard*. Please set your cellphones and other devices to silent for the duration of the meeting. Committee proceedings are being streamed live on the Internet and broadcast on Alberta Assembly TV. The audio and video stream and the transcripts of the meeting can be accessed via the Legislative Assembly website.

Let's move on to the approval of the agenda. Do members have any changes or additions to the agenda?

Seeing none, would a member like to move that the agenda for June – would you like to make a change? Okay. How about I read the motion out. He's very eager. Thank you.

Mr. Panda: Because you both recited something, so I'm just trying to get . . .

The Chair: I will make sure that you move that motion.

Seeing none, would a member move that the agenda for the June 6, 2018, meeting of the Standing Committee on Public Accounts be approved as distributed? Mr. Panda. Thank you, sir. Any discussion on the motion? Seeing none, all in favour? Any opposed? Thank you.

Thank you, Mr. Panda, for moving that motion.

Moving on to the fall 2018 meetings. The committee's working group met on May 30 and put together a proposed schedule for both the out-of-session meeting and the regular weekly meetings during the fall 2018 sitting. Members should have copies of the draft meeting schedules, which were posted to the internal committee website. We do have copies at the front here. Does any member need a copy? I'll wait till everybody has a copy.

Draft schedule 1, which is titled Proposed Out-of-session Meeting for a Date in September/October, 2018. This schedule reflects the working group's proposal of an out-of-session meeting for a date to be determined in the fall. It incorporates the two ministries that were on the committee's approved spring 2018 schedule; however, the committee has not had the opportunity to meet with them during the spring session.

I will now open the floor for discussion and any questions the committee members may have concerning the out-of-session meeting. Mr. Malkinson.

Mr. Malkinson: Thank you very much, Mr. Chair. I appreciate what the working group has done to put this schedule together. I'd like to propose a revision to the motion you just made, and I have copies of it for those who would like one. I'll just read it out here as the copies go around. I would revise your motion, Chair, to say: moved by myself that the Standing Committee on Public Accounts reject the draft schedule for an out-of-session meeting in the fall of 2018 and move the meeting with Infrastructure to the October 30 slot on the fall 2018 meeting schedule, shifting all other meetings forward in the schedule.

6:25

The Chair: Mr. Malkinson.

Mr. Malkinson: Yeah.

The Chair: I apologize. Can you let research have a quick look at it?

Mr. Malkinson: Oh, for sure.

The Chair: Mr. Malkinson, we may have some opportunity to strengthen this motion but still get to your intent if that's fine.

Mr. Malkinson: Yeah.

The Chair: I would like research to bring forward their, I guess, advice, if you will, on how to proceed.

Dr. Massolin: Okay. Just a couple of comments on this. I just think that maybe you can achieve what you need to achieve by simply, you know, dealing with the out-of-session schedule as proposed and then moving on to the next item, just because it's good

parliamentary practice not to move a motion to reject. The obvious way in which to do that is just to vote against it.

Mr. Malkinson: Okay. With that then . . .

The Chair: Does he need to withdraw the motion, then, that is proposed here and then propose a second motion?

Dr. Massolin: Yeah. Did he formally move it? I don't think he formally moved it. I don't know. Did he?

The Chair: I'm not sure.

Did you move that motion formally?

Mr. Malkinson: I think I did.

Dr. Massolin: Okay, then he has to withdraw it.

The Chair: Then we have our answer.

Mr. Malkinson: That was the intent, anyways. What I'll do, then, Mr. Chair, is I will withdraw that motion and then simply say that . . .

Mr. Gotfried: Chair, sorry. Are we dealing with a motion here? The chair can't make a motion, so I'm not sure that we're dealing with some substantive motions here that are apparently being revised. We don't even have anything to revise. What's going on?

The Chair: I think the discussion here is to withdraw this entire motion.

Mr. Gotfried: Sorry. Was there a motion on the table?

The Chair: There was a motion proposed by Mr. Malkinson on the table.

Mr. Gotfried: That was his revision to something.

The Chair: I agree, and I think that research has come up with some concerns regarding this specific point.

Mr. Gotfried: The chair can't make a motion, correct? So he was referring to a motion that I think was never made.

Mr. Malkinson: Mr. Chair, if we could just allow me to withdraw my motion, I can provide clarity that I think you are seeking, Mr. Gotfried.

The Chair: But we need unanimous consent for that, I believe. Is there unanimous consent for the withdrawal of this motion? Any against? The motion is withdrawn.

Sorry, Mr. Malkinson. Can I go to Mr. McIver and then I'll come back to you, sir?

Mr. Malkinson: Sure.

Mr. McIver: Chair, I'm not trying to cause a ruckus. I'm a substitute on the committee. I was just kind of thinking that I'm going to suggest, I hope gently, that we could probably get into duelling motions or pass a motion, but if someone was to articulate, perhaps Mr. Malkinson, what he hopes to have happen, then we could probably find a motion that would accommodate that or at least talk about finding a motion that would accommodate that. I'm trying not to upset the apple cart, but I was trying to make a helpful suggestion.

Mr. Malkinson: I think that's an excellent idea.

The Chair: Please, Mr. Malkinson, if you wouldn't mind telling us what your intent was.

Mr. Malkinson: Yes. I apologize to the committee. The motion I had drafted had assumed that we had a motion already on the table to approve the out-of-session schedule as distributed, and that was my mistake for trying to be a little too smart and plan ahead there.

What I am proposing to the committee is that we do not have an out-of-session meeting – this would be the handout that we just got from the chair with Infrastructure, Community and Social Services, and Health-AHS – and instead move to, like I said, not have this meeting out of session. But since Infrastructure was the Auditor General's number one recommendation in his last report that the Public Accounts Committee should talk to, we should move the Infrastructure meeting that would've happened if this meeting of the Public Accounts was to occur and put it at the top of the fall 2018 meeting schedule, moving all of the other items on it down. In order to do that, which is my understanding from Parliamentary Counsel, assuming the committee agreed, we would need to reject having meetings out of session between now and the fall, and then we would need a second amendment to revise the schedule that you handed out yourself, Chair.

That is what I am proposing, and hopefully everyone is following me on that.

The Chair: Okay. I do have a proposed motion for out of session. In this case as government if you chose to vote that down, then we would move on to the other schedule, which is where you could propose to amend it.

Mr. Hunter: Mr. Chair, I just need some clarity. We're not taking into consideration both the out-of-session and in-session documents at this time; we're only taking into consideration the out-of-session document?

The Chair: Out of session at this time.

Mr. Hunter: Okay. Thank you.

Mr. Gotfried: Mr. Chair, I think we could simplify this. I'd like to make a motion that we accept the out-of-session schedule as proposed.

The Chair: Okay. Would you be okay if I read out the motion that I have prepared for me that says exactly that, sir?

Mr. Gotfried: Sure. Then you can't make a motion. Am I correct?

The Chair: No. Then you will move that motion.

Mr. Gotfried: I would, yes. Thank you.

The Chair: I will read into the record that the Standing Committee on Public Accounts approve the draft schedule for an out-of-session meeting in the fall 2018 on a date to be determined as distributed.

Mr. Gotfried: I so move.

The Chair: Thank you.

Any discussion on the motion? Mr. Clark. Thank you. It's been a long day.

Mr. Clark: I would just say that I think it's entirely reasonable that we would finish off the existing schedule. I don't think there's any reason why we would not want to hear from the two ministries that are under consideration – both Infrastructure and Community and

Social Services are important – and for us to come back for one day at some point in September or October seems entirely reasonable. I'm not a historian. I don't know the full background of the Public Accounts Committee, but my understanding is that this is not uncommon and that it is going to allow us to discharge our duties as a committee and see through the schedule as originally planned and hear from both of those ministries. So I would certainly encourage all members to support this motion.

The Chair: Okay.

Mr. Malkinson.

Mr. Malkinson: Thank you very much, Mr. Chair. Just to Mr. Clark's point, historically in this committee, particularly when we first started in 2015, there was quite a big backlog in this particular committee, which has now, for all intents and purposes, been caught up with. I mean, so I believe that an out-of-session meeting isn't necessary at this time. I know that I definitely want to be out talking and consulting with Albertans over the summer. This particular committee meets the most out of all committees because, of course, when we are in session, it meets every single Tuesday morning. So I think we have ample time to, you know, work through the many things that are on the schedule for fall 2018 when we get there.

I'm going to be encouraging people to vote down this particular motion.

The Chair: Mr. Gotfried.

6:35

Mr. Gotfried: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I think I'd like to maybe sort of frame this discussion. PAC Alberta with a lot of the guidance of our staff and the Auditor General's office has gotten a very strong reputation, I think, across this country for being a very effective Public Accounts Committee through a lot of hard work, as was referenced by the Member for Calgary-Currie that we had a significant backlog there. But I think we've been effective. I think we've been efficient. I think we've been doing our duty and upholding our responsibility to be accountable to Albertans. I'd like to think that we've all been in here to dispense our duties in a nonpartisan manner as we can possibly can.

But I don't want us to get into a situation where we get back into a backlog. We have a job to do here on behalf of Albertans, to work with the ministries and the Auditor General's office providing us guidance and our research services team as well, who do yeoman's duty in terms of providing us with great insights on how we should keep our government to account on behalf of Albertans in a nonpartisan manner, asking good questions, well-researched questions, solid questions, those that are indicated as outstanding issues from the Auditor General's office. I think we've been very lucky to have an incredible team there, too, to support us.

We also have a history and, I think, a precedent now of doing some out-of-session meetings, including some super PAC days we did in the past, where we had two days back to back. It was highly efficient, got us further ahead.

What's going to happen here, Mr. Chair, is we are going to bump something off the bottom of this. We're going to bump at least one off the bottom, and we're going to miss two. That to me is falling behind. I'd like to think that we can all take a day out of session to ensure that that does not occur, that we actually stay not only on top of things but ahead of things because we may find that there's a ministry, through the course of the next six months, that we need to slot in here. Or we may have a constituency week that we choose not to meet in, or there may be something unusual that occurs that could put us behind. This is an opportunity for us to stay ahead, to dispense our responsibility to Albertans in being a Public Accounts

Committee; i.e., holding this government to account on behalf of Albertans and all of our constituents and all of the Legislature as well.

I would encourage everybody to vote for this, not for any backroom partisan reasons but because it is the right thing to do.

Thank you.

The Chair: Thank you.

Mr. Hunter: Mr. Chair, if I understand correctly, this committee has commissioned the all-party working group to do their work. From what I understand, this is a draft proposal based upon work that was done by that all-party group. You know, I think that you get a good, broad cross-section of views, and I think it was properly vetted, so I would be very much in favour of going based upon that recommendation.

The Chair: Thank you.

Any further discussion? Okay. We will call the question. All in favour? Any opposed?

Mr. Gotfried: Could we record the vote, please, Mr. Chair?

The Chair: Let's proceed with a recorded vote. Let's go around the table starting to my right. Please state your name for the record.

Mr. Panda: Prasad Panda, Calgary-Foothills. I'm in favour.

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

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

Mr. McIver: Ric McIver, Calgary-Hays. In favour.

Mr. Clark: Greg Clark, MLA, Calgary-Elbow. In favour.

Ms Renaud: Marie Renaud, St. Albert. No.

Mr. Piquette: Colin Piquette, Athabasca-Sturgeon-Redwater. No.

Ms Luff: Robyn Luff, Calgary-East. No.

Mr. Malkinson: Brian Malkinson. No.

Mr. Carson: Jon Carson. No.

Ms Miller: Barb Miller. No.

Mr. Nielsen: Chris Nielsen. No.

Dr. Turner: Bob Turner. No.

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

Mrs. Sawchuk: We have five members for the motion and nine members against the motion.

The Chair: Okay.

That motion was defeated.

Moving on to draft schedule 2. Draft schedule 2 is labelled Standing Committee on Public Accounts: Fall 2018 Meeting Schedule. Draft schedule 2 proposes a schedule for the committee meetings in the fall 2018 sitting.

I will now open the floor for discussions on any questions the committee may have.

Mr. McIver: Chair, well, in the spirit of trying to get the work done and accommodate, I think Mr. Malkinson was suggesting – and I'm not trying to put words in his mouth; I'm just trying to reiterate what I think he was saying – that if the out-of-session meeting went to

the October 30 meeting and everything from the October 30 meeting slid down, then Education would drop off the bottom, the way I see it. What would happen if in the last meeting Advanced Education and Education were both done that day so that you wouldn't lose anything, or is that just not possible?

Mr. Gotfried: Well, unless we come in the evening as well.

Mr. McIver: Okay. Well, I'm asking. I was trying to be helpful here.

The Chair: Okay. Mr. Gotfried.

Mr. Gotfried: Thank you, Mr. Chair. You know, I guess we're now sort of really going back, as we move forward here, to the proposals and the revisions done by the Member for Calgary-Currie, which were just to bump Infrastructure and then bump down off the bottom there. I have some concerns. We had the opportunity with the committee and the government response to the Better Healthcare for Albertans Auditor General's report – if we remember, this committee actually made a special motion in support of that particular document because of the importance of it. We were thanked by the Auditor General for taking that bold move, to actually take one of the reports and do something with it more than just bringing it through this committee. It concerns me that that is not on this list to bring it forward, which would have been one of my other arguments that we should have voted to do the out of session. That is now defeated, so I'm not going to go back there.

I understand that this bumping down means putting us behind, just as I noted earlier. Not only that, we've got Community and Social Services, which is a carry-over, which we will not be addressing. It's going to be bumped into the next session beyond that, so into spring of 2019, which is almost a full year of now falling behind. It concerns me that just bumping down and bumping down is now leaving us behind, as I had suggested, and that the special report from the Auditor General on Better Healthcare for Albertans is now going to be basically completely dismissed off this list.

Thank you.

The Chair: Mr. Malkinson.

Mr. Malkinson: Thank you very much, Mr. Chair. You know, talking about Community and Social Services, I mean, they were before this committee less than a year ago, so we have had in the very near past opportunities to talk about that particular ministry and the Auditor General's report around it.

As mentioned before with the motion I tried to make originally, you know, my thought was that by moving Infrastructure from the list – that was the Auditor General's number one recommendation of what we should address in this Public Accounts Committee meeting. I know that the remainder of the items on this, the ministries coming forward, from my understanding from the working group, has everyone's number one preference in it, including the Auditor General's.

Mr. Chair, if you'd indulge the committee, just so we're sort of looking at perhaps the same document since there seems to be a desire to add Infrastructure, I do have an amended version of the schedule that has Infrastructure on it. If we could perhaps have the same copy in front of us just as we move along with discussion.

6:45

The Chair: Are you moving a motion, then?

Mr. Malkinson: Yes.

Mr. Clark: Don't. Sorry.

Mr. Malkinson: Greg says no, apparently, but I'm getting there.

The Chair: Okay. You have the floor, sir. Are you moving a motion?

Mr. Malkinson: Yes, I am.

The Chair: Okay, sir. Is it okay if I have research work with me to craft said motion?

Mr. Malkinson: I will make a motion to the effect, pending appropriate corrections from Parliamentary Counsel, that the Standing Committee on Public Accounts approve the fall 2018 draft schedule for meetings during session as revised. The revision is coming around. The change would be that it adds Infrastructure for the October 30 meeting, and then all the other ones are bumped down appropriately in the schedule. I am of course willing to entertain more exact legal wording from Parliamentary Counsel on that one.

The Chair: I wish we had elevator music. I apologize. I want to make sure that I get this to reflect exactly what you're hoping, sir.

Mr. Malkinson: No worries, Mr. Chair. I feel like this one should be straightforward, but we'll get the exact wording in there.

Mr. Hunter: Can we comment on it?

The Chair: Until I get a motion to put on the floor I'd rather – bear with me here, sir.

Mr. Gotfried: Are we just going to accept the motion, accept that it's right? Keep it simple, Chair. Keep it simple.

The Chair: All right. Please bear with me, Mr. Clark.
The clerk will read it into the record.

Mrs. Sawchuk: The proposed motion by Mr. Malkinson is that the fall 2018 Public Accounts Committee meeting schedule be approved, beginning with the Ministry of Infrastructure being scheduled for October 30, 2018, and the remaining ministries and/or entities being advanced to the following date in the schedule.

The Chair: Does that accurately reflect your intent, sir?

Mr. Malkinson: Yes, it does.

The Chair: Thank you.

We have a motion on the floor. I will start with Mr. Hunter, then I'll go to Mr. Clark, and then Mr. McIver.

Mr. Hunter: Now, one of the points, Mr. Chair, that Mr. Malkinson made was that Infrastructure was the first priority of the Auditor General. From what I understand of the process of this all-party committee, each member of the committee had an opportunity, just based upon the rotation that we have, a similar rotation, to be able to determine which one they wanted to put on there. Now, if the deputy chair was concerned that this has to be on there, I'm not sure why it wasn't put on then. It would have probably saved us having to go through amendments and different motions that we have. I'm not sure exactly why we're spending so much time on this. If this was so important, why wasn't it put on at that stage?

The Chair: Okay. I'd like to respond. We do need to be cautious about working group discussions as they are in camera. They are a

mechanism for caucuses to be able to work through this stuff, but in the end it is a proposal they move forward to the committee. It is to the committee's will whether they accept that proposal or not. In this case it appears that the committee is disagreeing with the working group and moving in a different direction.

Mr. Hunter, did you have any further comments?

Mr. Hunter: No.

The Chair: Mr. Clark.

Mr. Clark: Thank you, Chair. I'll say two things. Research services and the committee clerk did some great work to send around some draft motions for us, which was what I was hoping we could have actually accomplished to avoid the amount of time it took to kind of figure that out. So I would encourage all members on both sides that when preparing for these meetings, it would be really incumbent on us to take advantage of the good work that's already been done. There is a motion in our briefing package that was presented by the committee clerk to us a couple of days ago and probably could have saved us some time there. Just a word of advice to all of us on both sides to remember that, to always take advantage of that good work where we can.

On the substance of the motion itself, you know, I think that the six items that we had previously on the proposed schedule were the right ones to have there. Again, I'm disappointed that we're not able to consider both Community and Social Services and Infrastructure, and I'm especially concerned that we're not going to have an opportunity to debate and discuss and dig deeper into the Better Healthcare for Albertans report, which I think is a seminal report, one of the most important things that the Auditor General's office has produced in a number of years. It is something that represents fully 47, 48 per cent of the entire provincial budget, something that impacts the lives of every single one of the people of Alberta, and it contains, if I'm not mistaken, 41 really important recommendations. So for this committee to have the opportunity to review that is, I think, absolutely, obviously not only within our mandate but in the best interest of Albertans.

So I am very disappointed that the government would seek to not have us review that report. I, frankly, wonder what they're worried about. There's a lot of really good stuff in there. You know, if the government really does want to improve the health care system and move it towards a more integrated system of care, save money, have better health outcomes, then I think we would be wise to dig deeper into those recommendations.

I certainly cannot support the schedule as proposed because of those reasons. It also means that we will not have an opportunity to review the second-largest ministry in the government, which is Education. You know, these are things that I think if this committee is going to be focusing on material, substantive things, which we should be, we should be looking at the biggest ministries at every opportunity. The schedule we had before us previously achieved that. I hope the government would reconsider and allow us to take on all of those ministries as we previously discussed.

Thank you.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Clark.

Mr. McIver, you have something to add, sir?

6:55

Mr. McIver: Yeah. Well, I'm perplexed here. The government members talked about how the committee was behind before and how they'd caught up, and now it seems to be willingly falling behind again based on the motion that's on the floor.

What's on the page that we're voting on is that, one, we added Infrastructure as the first meeting. What's missing is dump Community and Social Services, dump health care and AHS, and dump Education. So what the government member has moved is to dump the number one biggest budget in the government, AHS and health care; to dump the second-biggest budget item in the government and not do anything with it, Education; and dump persons with developmental disabilities from Community and Social Services. That probably needs to be added on here because this is a dumping of three important things, and I think that's motion, you know, that's actually being moved here, to do all these things and dump those three what I would call pretty key issues.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. McIver.

Mr. Malkinson and then Dr. Turner.

Mr. Malkinson: Thank you very much, Mr. Chair. Just a quick comment. Mr. McIver is correct that the proposed schedule through my motion would have Education fall off the bottom of it, so to speak. Mr. McIver is correct that that would fall off the schedule. On the ones who are saying, "Well, you know, we're not going to be talking about these items or that we're somehow missing out on them," I mentioned before that Community and Social Services has been before this committee less than a year ago, and we had the Ministry of Health and Alberta Health Services before us a week ago, so I think that to say that we're not talking about these would be perhaps incorrect.

The Chair: Okay.

Dr. Turner.

Dr. Turner: Yes. I just want to amplify, actually, what my colleague just said about Health. I think what's important is that we're not reviewing the Ministry of Health in this. We're reviewing their response to the work that this committee did, actually, in a PAC meeting, and this committee decided that it was going to ask for a response. That response has been provided. The response was fulsome. Indeed, there have been many chances since that time to discuss the details. Just a little over a week ago we had the Ministry of Health here, and, in fact, in the new schedule you're going to the have the Ministry of Health again, I guess, on November 20.

It was interesting. At the PAC meeting eight days ago many of us asked questions related to Better Healthcare for Albertans, including the clinical information systems, and I particularly made a point of asking about when the patient portal was going to be introduced. That was one of the things that I have been particularly interested in, and that relates to the clinical information systems as well. I was reassured by the associate deputy minister's response that that patient portal is going to be operational this year. I'd remind the committee as well that Health has been before estimates since that time, and the opposition had three hours to query the various priorities and plans of the ministry at that time.

I can recall several questions in question period about the clinical information system and about other things that were in that report that had been done. So I think it's incorrect to say that we as a Legislature haven't been dealing with that, and I really don't think that we need to sort of rehash a lot of that.

The Chair: Thank you, Dr. Turner.

Mr. Gotfried.

Mr. Gotfried: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Thank you to all the members for their comments. You know, I'm a little concerned because what I'm hearing is kind of a defensiveness and a bit of partisan sort of rhetoric coming into this, but I think there was mention by the

Member for Calgary-Hays that this Better Healthcare report is something that I think deserves our diligence. In fact in my estimation, and any members of this committee could view it differently, we are actually forcing ourselves to fall behind here now. That's not something that I take lightly in our role in this committee.

Having said that, I think that in the spirit of co-operation here we want to move ahead with this. It's not a bad list; it's just one that I believe, as mentioned by the Member for Calgary-Hays, is now potentially putting us in a situation that if something unusual were to happen and we would lose one of these slots, we in fact would be falling behind. I think we've worked hard in this committee together to get ahead, and it took us a while to do that. We had a lot of backlog to work through, and we did. We did superpacked days or whatever their unofficial, untechnical name, but they were superpacked days where we did come in and roll our sleeves up for a couple of days.

Reluctantly but in the spirit of co-operation and, really, to demonstrate goodwill around the concept of our commitment to nonpartisanship in this committee, I think that myself and I hope my colleagues would be prepared to support this. However, I'd like to put it on notice that down the road I would like to see us bring back those things, those items that we have, in my colleague's words, dumped or pushed behind or have potentially fallen behind, that we put those at the front of the list at the next opportunity we have and make sure that we don't fall behind.

There may be issues that arise through the coming six months that this committee feels that we need to get to. There may be a new report that we're unaware of that comes from the Auditor General's office that we think is an important one for us to address in our responsibility and our commitment to providing accountability to Albertans.

I would hope that we don't, you know, try and protect anyone. Our role here is nonpartisan. We are supposed to be here to hold government and government ministries to account where there may be shortcomings as identified by the Auditor General, who is completely nonpartisan. I'm prepared to support this so that we can move forward, and I hope we can move forward in a very nonpartisan, very committed way as a committee here and that we can embrace the opportunity to do what's best for Albertans.

Thank you.

The Chair: Mr. Malkinson.

Mr. Malkinson: Thank you very much. Echoing my colleague Mr. Gotfried, going forward into the future, I think the Public Accounts Committee has worked quite well in that spirit. Of course, if there was to be a report that comes up, I'm sure the working group would be able to work with all parties if there needed to be any particular items to come up in the future.

We'll thank you for the words. I think we're coming near the end time, so I'm going to stop talking.

The Chair: Any further discussion?

Okay. Let's see who's all in favour. All opposed?

Mr. McIver: Motion to record the vote, Chair.

The Chair: A recorded vote has been requested. Let's give this a round two. Starting from my right, please announce your name for the record and how you vote.

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

Mr. Panda: Prasad Panda, Calgary-Foothills. I oppose.

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

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

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

Mr. Clark: Greg Clark, Calgary-Elbow. Opposed.

Ms Renaud: Marie Renaud, St. Albert. Yes.

Mr. Piquette: Colin Piquette, Athabasca-Sturgeon-Redwater. Yes.

Ms Luff: Robyn Luff. Yes.

Mr. Malkinson: Brian Malkinson. In favour.

Mr. Carson: Jon Carson. Yes.

Ms Miller: Barb Miller. In favour.

Mr. Nielsen: Chris Nielsen. Yes.

Dr. Turner: Bob Turner. Yes.

The Chair: Thank you. We're just tabulating the votes.

Mrs. Sawchuk: The vote is recorded as nine members in favour of the motion and five opposed.

7:05

The Chair: Thank you.

That motion is carried.

Moving on to other business, are there any other items for discussion under other business?

If not, depending on the decisions made for the draft schedule, the committee will be meeting next on Tuesday, October 30, 2018, with the Ministry of Infrastructure.

Would a member move to adjourn the meeting?

Dr. Turner: So moved.

The Chair: Dr. Turner. All in favour? Any opposed? Carried.

[The committee adjourned at 7:06 p.m.]

