



Legislative Assembly of Alberta

The 27th Legislature
Third Session

Standing Committee
on
Public Safety and Services

Financial Disclosure Rules for Leadership Contestants

Tuesday, April 13, 2010
6:31 p.m.

Transcript No. 27-3-6

Legislative Assembly of Alberta
The 27th Legislature
Third Session

Standing Committee on Public Safety and Services

Drysdale, Wayne, Grande Prairie-Wapiti (PC), Chair
Kang, Darshan S., Calgary-McCall (AL), Deputy Chair

Boutilier, Guy C., Fort McMurray-Wood Buffalo (Ind)
Brown, Dr. Neil, QC, Calgary-Nose Hill (PC)
Calahasen, Pearl, Lesser Slave Lake (PC)
Cao, Wayne C.N., Calgary-Fort (PC)
Chase, Harry B., Calgary-Varsity (AL)*
Forsyth, Heather, Calgary-Fish Creek (WA)
Griffiths, Doug, Battle River-Wainwright (PC)
MacDonald, Hugh, Edmonton-Gold Bar (AL)
Rogers, George, Leduc-Beaumont-Devon (PC)
Sandhu, Peter, Edmonton-Manning (PC)
Xiao, David H., Edmonton-McClung (PC)

* substitution for Hugh MacDonald

Also in Attendance

Hinman, Paul, Calgary-Glenmore (WA)

Support Staff

W.J. David McNeil	Clerk
Louise J. Kamuchik	Clerk Assistant/Director of House Services
Micheline S. Gravel	Clerk of <i>Journals</i> /Table Research
Robert H. Reynolds, QC	Senior Parliamentary Counsel
Shannon Dean	Senior Parliamentary Counsel
Corinne Dacyshyn	Committee Clerk
Jody Rempel	Committee Clerk
Karen Sawchuk	Committee Clerk
Rhonda Sorensen	Manager of Communications Services
Melanie Friesacher	Communications Consultant
Tracey Sales	Communications Consultant
Philip Massolin	Committee Research Co-ordinator
Stephanie LeBlanc	Legal Research Officer
Diana Staley	Research Officer
Rachel Stein	Research Officer
Liz Sim	Managing Editor of <i>Alberta Hansard</i>

6:31 p.m.

Tuesday, April 13, 2010

[Mr. Drysdale in the chair]

The Chair: I'll call to order the Standing Committee on Public Safety and Services. I'd ask that those members that will join the committee introduce themselves for the record. Before we start, I'll just note that pursuant to Standing Order 56(2.1) to (2.4) Mr. Chase will be substituting for Mr. MacDonald this evening.

With that, I'll start with Mr. Rogers, and we'll introduce ourselves for the record.

Mr. Rogers: Well, thank you, Mr. Chairman. Good evening, ladies and gentlemen. I'm George Rogers, the Member for Leduc-Beaumont-Devon.

Dr. Brown: My name is Neil Brown. I'm the MLA for Calgary-Nose Hill. I believe we do have a quorum now, Mr. Chair.

Mr. Chase: Thank you. As the chair pointed out, Harry Chase, Calgary-Varsity, substituting for Hugh MacDonald and also representing the interests of Darshan Kang, who will be returning from India from a family funeral.

Mr. Cao: Wayne Cao, Calgary-Fort MLA.

Mr. Reynolds: Rob Reynolds, Senior Parliamentary Counsel, Legislative Assembly.

Dr. Massolin: Philip Massolin, committee research co-ordinator, Legislative Assembly Office.

Ms Sorensen: Rhonda Sorensen, manager of communications services for the Legislative Assembly Office.

Mr. Boutilier: Guy Boutilier, Fort McMurray-Wood Buffalo.

Mr. Sandhu: Peter Sandhu, MLA, Edmonton-Manning.

Ms Calahasen: Pearl Calahasen, Lesser Slave Lake.

Mrs. Forsyth: Heather Forsyth, Calgary-Fish Creek.

Ms Rempel: Jody Rempel, committee clerk, Legislative Assembly Office.

The Chair: Thank you, everyone.

We'll have an approval of the agenda. Would anybody like to add or change any items on the agenda? If not, I need a motion to adopt. Moved by Mrs. Forsyth. All those in favour? Opposed? Carried.

Approval of the minutes of the previous meetings. We have quite a list of meetings because we did the estimates. First of all, we'll start with the meeting from December 9. Has everybody had a chance to look it over? Are there any errors or omissions? Would somebody like to move to adopt those?

Ms Calahasen: Sure.

The Chair: Thanks, Ms Calahasen. All in favour? Opposed? Carried.

Okay. The rest are just the estimates from the spring so we'll move through them fairly fast. I'd like a motion to approve the minutes from the February 10 meeting if there are no errors or omissions. Mr. Sandhu. Thank you. All in favour? Carried.

Minutes from the February 17 meeting. Any errors or omissions? If not, if somebody would like to move adoption.

Mr. Cao: I move.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Cao. All in favour? Opposed? Carried.

Minutes from the February 24 meeting.

Ms Calahasen: My goodness.

The Chair: These are all just the estimates we did this spring. They're just the one-pager. Would somebody like to . . .

Mr. Rogers: I'll move those, Mr. Chairman, for February 24.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Rogers. All in favour? Opposed? Carried.

The minutes from the March 9 meeting.

Dr. Brown: I'll move the adoption of the minutes as read, Mr. Chair.

The Chair: Thank you, Dr. Brown. All those in favour? Opposed? Carried.

The minutes from the March 17 meeting. Mr. Chase. Thank you very much. Any errors or omissions? If not, all in favour? Opposed? Carried. Thank you. We got that job done.

I guess that brings us to the purpose of this meeting tonight. Included in your briefing materials for this meeting you all received a copy from the Minister of Justice requesting that the committee conduct an inquiry concerning recommendations for financial disclosure rules for leadership contestants. The standing orders allow up to six months for a policy field committee to complete this type of inquiry. If you have any questions on that, Mr. Reynolds will be here to answer any questions.

Seeing none, I think that we have the discussion items under 4(b)(1).

Mrs. Forsyth: I just wanted a clarification on this, but that's all right. I'll talk to Rob after.

The Chair: Well, if you've got a question, go ahead.

Mrs. Forsyth: I just need it clear because I'm new to the committee. I apologize. We have this memo from the minister in regard to the leadership campaign. What are we supposed to do with it? You said public inquiry.

The Chair: Yes. She has a list of questions on there. We're supposed to go through that this summer and within six months give her a report from this committee on our recommendations.

Mrs. Forsyth: Oh. Okay. Thank you. I just have never been on the committee before, so I wasn't sure.

Mr. Chase: Sorry. Just in order to get up to speed, as the hon. Member for Calgary-Fish Creek pointed out, are we reviewing the leadership leading up to 2008, or are we setting the rules for future leadership?

The Chair: We're setting rules for future leadership.

Mr. Chase: Okay. Thank you. I just wanted to be sure.

The Chair: Everybody received the letter, I think, from the minister?

Mr. Chase: Yes. I apologize for not having it with me. I was going to look off the hon. member's beside me.

Mr. Cao: Our eyes are in front, so we look forward.

The Chair: In order to do this inquiry under Standing Order 52.07(2), we'll go through the discussion items. We have our research committee here to work for us. First, I think that we need identification of the stakeholders. I don't know. Does anybody have any ideas on that?

Mr. Rogers: Well, maybe just to sort of kick the discussion off, Mr. Chairman. I think it's very clear, I guess, that ultimately the public at large would certainly have an interest in this topic, but I would believe that for the purposes of our work, the stakeholders would be the actual registered political parties in this province. I would expect that we would be reaching out to those registered parties for their input and working with that input. Ultimately, those parties and individuals will get input from their various supporters, the public at large. But I would suggest that for the purposes of our work, the stakeholders are, in fact, the registered political parties. If I'm not mistaken – and I'll maybe look to some help from our staff – I believe we have eight registered political parties in the province.

The Chair: Yes. I'm sure the research committee can check on that, but if we say "all registered parties."
Dr. Brown.

6:40

Dr. Brown: Thanks, Mr. Chair. I don't disagree with what Mr. Rogers said with respect to the stakeholders, but I think his comment regarding the public at large being the real stakeholder is quite accurate. I would say as a preliminary comment, if I could, that I have found the utility of these committees and the investigation not necessarily improved with the breadth of the stakeholder group to which we might consult. I know that we have a diverse group of people that are on this committee from a number of different parties, all of the parties, in fact, in the House. I would suggest that our best opportunity, perhaps, would be, with the assistance of Dr. Massolin and our research staff, to gather information from other jurisdictions and to look at some of the other legislation that is in place in other jurisdictions, not necessarily just in Canada but in terms of what disclosure and so on is going on with respect to leadership.

With the diversity of the group that we have on the committee, I think we can operate very effectively to get to the bottom, to the meat of the issue. I think we will have a good grasp of what's required, and I don't think that it's necessary to go into long public consultations or to reach out to great length into a wide variety of stakeholders. For that reason I would agree with Mr. Rogers on his suggestion. If we are talking about consultations, it's one thing. If we're talking about stakeholders, it's quite another.

With respect to consultations I would suggest that we keep those fairly succinct and narrow and then look to the expertise of our committee and to the researchers to give us some additional ammunition. Then we go ahead and make some recommendations and not take a year and a half to do it. Let's get on with the job. I think we know what we need to do and what we need to accomplish to get this thing done.

The Chair: Thank you, Dr. Brown.

Mr. Chase: I understand the desire to streamline. Possibly through Dr. Philip Massolin we could make requests. Like, there are a number of political science professors, for example, who I'm sure have written papers or treatises on accountability and transparency in leadership. There are organizations that Dr. Philip Massolin might want to contact such as I believe the fellow's name is Duff Conacher of Democracy Watch. If it can be done internally through Dr. Phil's research – I understand the motivation behind my colleagues' concerns. As long as we set out who it is from whom we would like to seek that information, I think that breadth will be covered.

Mr. Cao: Well generally I am in agreement with the sort of stakeholders consultation, not public-wide, for a couple of reasons. One is that I think any organization, being a political party, has bylaws and internal operations. Really, when the government, for example, tries to look into and run associations and tell them how to do it, I'm kind of leery of that. Then the public may not have any membership in the association but want to run the association, telling people how to fund raise, how to spend the money. I think that is, again, not something that I go for. So I will support the stakeholders, the ones that actually have a political organization and party. They raise their own money, and they will decide what to do.

I would venture an idea is to look at the bylaws, how each one is run and then if they have consistency in that. I think that's a very, very good initiative. Focus where we spend the best bang for our effort, I should say, in time and dollars.

Thank you.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Cao.
Next, Mr. Boutilier.

Mr. Boutilier: Thank you. I'd just like to go back for a moment, Mr. Chair, to what initiated this discussion. It appears it is due to a letter that has been sent to you as chair on February 25 from the Attorney General. I do have some questions on the letter that was initiated by the Minister of Justice. Is she here to answer some of my questions based on this letter?

The Chair: No, she's not. She sent the letter. This is what she requested us to do.

Mr. Boutilier: Have you had an opportunity to discuss the letter with her at all?

The Chair: Yes, I have. I met with the minister. This letter is pretty straightforward.

Mr. Boutilier: I appreciate, to the chair, that you've copied us at a later date her letter. Members of the standing committee are not copied on the letter from the minister. You know, my advice would be, as a courtesy in the future, that perhaps when the minister sends something to the chair, copy the appropriate standing committee members as well.

I wasn't part of that discussion that you had with the Attorney General. Who's prepared to answer the questions based on the author of the letter of February 25?

The Chair: This letter and recommendations were also tabled in the House.

Mr. Boutilier: In accordance with the letter – that was the report on the March 3 provincial general election – the reference that caught my attention was the request that the standing committee inquire. I just want to be, first of all, very clear. This is not an inquiry. But under the terminology that’s used by the Attorney General, it says to inquire. Is one to assume there is a perception that this could be an inquiry?

The Chair: I don’t know if Mr. Reynolds, our legal counsel, wants to answer that.

Mr. Reynolds: Thank you. Well, yes, it would be an inquiry under Standing Order 52.07.

Mr. Boutilier: It is a public inquiry.

Mr. Reynolds: No.

Mr. Boutilier: I need to understand the distinction, please.

Mr. Reynolds: It’s an inquiry under the standing orders. I don’t know whether you’re referring to a public inquiry under the Public Inquiries Act. It is not that. This is not under the Public Inquiries Act.

Standing Order 52.07 lays out what a policy field committee can do when it receives a request. If I may, Mr. Chair, refer to 52.07(2), as you did:

A Policy Field Committee may on its own initiative, or at the request of a Minister, inquire into any matter concerned with the structure, organization, operation, efficiency or service delivery of any sector of public policy within its mandate.

That is what she wrote the letter pursuant to.

Mr. Boutilier: Okay. Thank you very much. Mr. Chair, thank you. I appreciate that insight.

Is there anything, Mr. Chair, from the meeting that you had with the Attorney General that you would like to share with the committee other than what is written here in terms of some insight that would help in developing the road map as we move forward in the public interest of Alberta?

The Chair: No. The minister laid out issues in this letter that she would like this committee to answer, and she wants it to come from an all-party committee to the House. We’ll give a report on our findings after this.

Mr. Boutilier: Okay. I thank you for that.

My final question would be: was this letter that she prepared based on Albertans speaking with her or stakeholders speaking with her, or is this a reaction to the actual Chief Electoral Officer in his report of 2008, which is mentioned? It’s a reaction to the electoral office?

The Chair: That’s right.

Mr. Boutilier: Okay. There’s nothing else to be added there?

The Chair: No.

Mr. Boutilier: Thank you very much.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Boutilier.
Next we have Ms Calahasen.

Ms Calahasen: Oh. Thank you, Mr. Chair. We’re looking at the identification of stakeholders, right? If we are going to invite the leaders of the various parties, how does the general public then get their information in to us? Do they go through the leaders, then? People can go through the party leaders?

6:50

The Chair: I’m sure they can. This committee hasn’t established how we’ll take the presentations.

Ms Calahasen: If that was an issue, then we’d have to deal with it in some way. We’d have to ask that question, right? Okay.

The Chair: Thank you.

First I have Mrs. Forsyth, and then Mr. Chase.

Mrs. Forsyth: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I was kind of following where Mr. Boutilier was, putting the story down. The minister has written this because, from my understanding, these are some of the recommendations that the Chief Electoral Officer made in his report. Some of that you see before the Legislature now. Some were accepted. Some weren’t accepted. I’m assuming these are the ones that weren’t accepted.

She’s now asking us under the standing order to investigate, I guess, and get some consultation and provide some input from this committee that I’m assuming will go into legislation if we make recommendations, for example, that we think leaders should be publicly disclosing all of the money they receive during a leadership campaign. I’m all for, as it was referred to, accountability and transparency. I think this is an opportunity for us as a committee.

Again, I want to share the fact that this is the first time I’ve been on the committee, so I’m just kind of feeling it out right now. Identification of stakeholders is important for us. I refer to my time as chair of the Alberta Heritage Savings Trust Fund Committee. I had that opportunity to be the chair with Jody, who did a fabulous job, as did some of the other staff. We had the researchers come back to us and suggest who they think the stakeholders should be, especially when we were doing some consulting on the Alberta heritage savings trust fund, because they look at it at a much broader picture. Through the committee meeting and even sitting with some people on the Heritage Savings Trust Fund Committee, they brought forward some stakeholders that I hadn’t, quite frankly, thought about, nor had any other members.

I think that’s one of the things that would give an opportunity for the researchers to look and say: gee, we think you should include, as is mentioned, registered political parties, leaders of political parties. You could get some political scientists. All of those can be included in that to hear what they think should happen. I think it was Dr. Brown that mentioned – or I could be wrong – other jurisdictions, what they’re doing.

I, quite frankly, would like to see the electoral officer come back. He’s the one that made the original recommendations, and it would be interesting to find out why he made the recommendations. He obviously got it from somewhere, so I think he should be included. Have him brought back and say: you know, we’d like to know why you made all these recommendations.

Mr. Rogers: If I may just . . .

The Chair: Actually, Mr. Chase is first.

Mr. Rogers: Sorry. Okay. I just wanted to follow up on that point. I don’t want to lose that. Thank you.

Mr. Chase: I understand Neil's concerns about the potential usage of time and expense of a travelling road show. Somewhere between a travelling road show and directing Dr. Philip Massolin to do some research, I would like to think, as we've done in our committee on Community Services, that I'm a member on, have some sort of small advertisement in major dailies indicating that we're looking for feedback, written feedback, I would say, on these issues. We've mentioned the main political parties, but whether it's dissatisfaction with the Liberal Party, the Conservative Party, the NDP party, the Wildrose party, there are a whole variety of . . .

Mr. Boutilier: Just being an independent.

Mr. Chase: Or being an independent. Sorry. I didn't want to exclude anybody.

We've got three different sort of outfits that have sprung up due to a lack of satisfaction with the current process. We've got Renew, we've got Reboot, and then we've got the democratic renewal group. I would suggest that we don't necessarily have to have them here to present. Possibly they might wish to do so, but I think, based on the fact that they're disenchanted with the existing system, they might have some interesting alternatives that we could at least consider. It's just a matter of how we outreach. As I say, I would like some form of minimal publication – it could be on a website as well – asking for that input so that we can say to people: “We value your input. We want to make changes. We'll personally improve your perception of the political process in Alberta.”

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Chase.
Mr. Rogers.

Mr. Rogers: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. A couple of points. I just wanted to refer back to Mrs. Forsyth's point about the possibility of inviting back the Chief Electoral Officer. I don't know how doable that will be. First of all, the individual that made those recommendations is no longer an officer of this Legislature, so whether that's possible – I'm not suggesting out of the question, but I just wonder about that because that individual is no longer an officer here. It may very well be that we would seek some input from the chief electoral office as such, but I just raise that because that particular individual is no longer in our employ.

The other concern that I do have, Mr. Chairman. Probably what might be best suited of our time this evening is to try to sketch out maybe a process, as some other members have suggested, that we would then direct our research staff to put together a road map, so to speak, but I would caution in terms of how wide we cast the net for a couple of reasons.

Number one – and I'm just exploring this. I'm not excluding anything. If we advertise, I guess the caution I would use is: careful what you wish for. I mean, we may get very little response, but the potential is there that we get a lot of response. I'm not so sure about the resources that we have at our disposal, the amount of time that we would expect to put into this over the summer till we put our report together in the six-month window to give back to the minister. My suggestion would be that we, in consultation with our staff, maybe talk about a reasonable list of not only people who are direct stakeholders, as we've identified, the registered political parties, but again some that might provide – people that write in this area, as has been suggested, political scientists and so on.

I'm a little cautious – again, this is just for discussion here – that as we cast the net so wide, who do you include? Who do you exclude? Some of these groups that were mentioned by my colleague Mr. Chase: Reboot, Renew, and what have you. Who do

you consider is legitimate? I mean, those three, but there are probably many others and some that we haven't heard of as yet, so I'm just a little afraid as we cast the net: how far do you cast it? Who do you include? Who do you exclude? I think we need to be clear in this room, with the aid of our staff, what should be included in the net and be careful that we do that in a manner that takes into account the amount of resources that we can actually put to this task.

Thank you.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Rogers.
Next, Ms Calahasen.

Ms Calahasen: Thank you. I just want to go back to that memo that was written by the minister. It talks about The Report on the March 3, 2008 Provincial General Election of the Twenty-seventh Legislative Assembly: “The former Chief Electoral Officer of Alberta recommended that the province adopt legislation regarding financial reporting by individuals who are seeking the leadership of their political party.”

In terms of what we're talking about relative to identification of stakeholders, I think that we have to invite the people who are at the helm of every political party that's in existence, legitimate ones. I think what we should make sure is that we have that group come in and talk to us or give us the information as to what we should be doing from their perspective as to how they would suggest, Mr. Chair.

When you look at this and what we're being told to do, or being asked – we're not being told, and we can determine – it certainly identifies that we should be talking to the leadership of political parties so that we can get their sense as to what their position is. I think that's where we should go in terms of identifying who those stakeholders are. So I would suggest that we should invite the – I don't know if you'd call them leaders or the executive officers of those different parties that are registered. I would suggest registered because I think those are the only ones that are legitimate at this point.

7:00

The Chair: Thank you, Ms Calahasen.
Next, Mrs. Forsyth.

Mrs. Forsyth: Well, thank you, Mr. Chair. I think this is an opportunity of moving forward on, again, accountability, transparency, and democracy. We struggled with this, trying on all of this public input, when I was the chair of the Alberta heritage savings trust fund. Our public meetings were very poorly attended, yet it seemed to be something that was on the top of the minds of Albertans when we talked about the Alberta heritage savings trust fund, not only that but the amount of hits that they were getting on the heritage savings trust fund.

To say that, you know, we don't need to have everybody in here to present. We are in an age of technology, where we have the Internet. People can talk on the Internet. We have Twitter, we have Facebook, we have web pages where we can certainly ask for the input of the public. I mean, this truly is the age of technology, so we can say to them, “We want your input; how do you feel?” and get their input. But we certainly don't need to have every person in the universe and the province appear before us. I think it is important, obviously, to have the political parties respond, and committee members may have questions to these particular parties no matter what their political stripes are.

I just want to go to the comment in regard to what Mr. Rogers said in regard to the Auditor General and his role as the former Auditor General.

Mr. Rogers: Chief Electoral Officer.

Mrs. Forsyth: Chief Electoral Officer. Sorry.

He certainly can come forward as an Albertan. There is no rationale or reason why he can't come forward as the previous electoral officer. There were many times before when you've had the former Premier of the province make a presentation and do things like that. Ron Hicks comes to mind, a recent deputy minister in this government who then just tabled within the Legislature how he felt about the roles and responsibilities of the Auditor General.

I think, quite frankly, he would be very valuable because this letter stems from his original recommendations. I really would like to understand why he made those recommendations. But I don't think we need to have a travelling road show. I've been on way too many of those.

The Chair: You're suggesting that we can just have a written presentation?

Mrs. Forsyth: Absolutely. Written presentations. They can respond. We've got communications people here. They can certainly respond to a web page.

Ms Calahasen: Mr. Chair, a clarification on the question from the member. You're saying that we should have people be able to write to us, anybody in the province of Alberta – is that what you're saying? – and that they would write to us and give us some information and provide us with their input and not go out into the general public. However, just generally rather than through the various party situations or just individuals: is that what you're saying?

Mrs. Forsyth: What I'm suggesting is we're in the age of technology.

Ms Calahasen: Right. I understand that.

Mrs. Forsyth: I think people are quite adept. I remember the thousands and thousands of hits that we were getting on the Alberta heritage savings trust fund because we had very capable staff. They can respond to a web page by asking the questions: how do you think the political process needs to be improved, and how can we have accountability and transparency? They can certainly add those questions, ask them for their input. I think, again, it's important. We have got some previous wonderful leaders in this province. You know, people like Preston Manning come to mind, who is a leader in this country in regard to all of the work that he's been doing. I think it's an opportunity to pick those political leaders that come before us, and the public can certainly respond through a website set-up.

Ms Calahasen: Okay. Then on that point, Mr. Chair, if we do that, how about the registered political parties that are in existence right now? I would like to hear what they have to say first before I go out and cast that wide net because I think what we want to know what their position is and what we should be doing because it's the political parties that the leadership is for, right? So I'm thinking that I would like to do that. Then I think we can make a decision as to whether or not we want to do the other.

Mrs. Forsyth: The problem that I have with that is the fact that we have a low voter turnout in this province. We need to seriously figure out how we engage the public in regard to democracy in this province, getting them engaged in politics, getting them interested in politics. The way to do that, I think, is getting their input.

Web pages can be very interesting, and they can be designed very artfully. You can start asking questions in regard to some of the things, quite frankly, that the minister has asked us in regard to the public disclosure on spending by leadership. All of those things can be incorporated into a web page so that the public can become engaged in the political process.

I think it's important to have our leaders of our political parties here. We have the Conservatives, the Liberals, the NDPs, and I don't want to forget my independent member because I'll hear about it.

Mr. Boutilier: I'm not a party. I'm just a one-man show, and I'm quite happy. Low overhead.

Mrs. Forsyth: But I think there are some political people that could probably be brought forward. I go back to Preston Manning, who is somebody that is well respected.

Ms Calahasen: He's not a leader at this point. My point is that I think what we have to do, my personal preference, Mr. Chair, is to be able to deal with those political leaders first. I think I want to hear from those individuals as to what their thoughts are relative to these and the questions that are here, because it's the leadership of those political parties we're talking about. We're not talking about general elections. We're talking about political leadership, parties, and the leadership races that do happen. I guess that's where I'm coming from.

Sorry. I didn't mean to dominate, Mr. Chair, but I think it's important for us to be able to deal with that issue first.

Mrs. Forsyth: And I would not argue with my colleague, honestly. What I'm trying to suggest here: you wouldn't have these political parties or these leadership races if you didn't have Albertans involved in picking those political parties and picking those particular leaderships. I strongly believe that they have to be engaged in the process. Get them involved in politics again. Get them interested in politics again no matter what their political stripe is. It's important especially to capture the young vote because they're the ones that are so enthusiastic about the technology that we could provide them. You could throw it out to the colleges and the universities. I mean, it's an opportunity.

Thank you.

The Chair: Thank you.

Next, Mr. Sandhu.

Mr. Sandhu: Thank you, Mr. Chair. It seems like we are kind of confused here. We are only talking about party leadership; we're not talking about main elections. So I say we need to hear from the registered political parties in Alberta. Then we can always expand the list after hearing from the real parties and not the lobby groups. You know, we need to hear from the parties' reps. That's all we need. We're talking about the leader of the party, not a civic election. We're talking about party leadership. If any party leader wanted to run, he had to sell the membership and get whoever he wanted engaged to become the leader of the party. All we are talking about is party leadership, I understand.

The Chair: Okay. Thank you, Mr. Sandhu.

Next we have Mr. Boutilier.

7:10

Mr. Boutilier: Thank you. Well, I think let's not lose sight of the outcome we're looking for, that for anyone who participates in some

type of leadership campaign with a political party, in keeping the spirit and the value that Albertans have of open and transparent, one would think that that should be disclosed. Yet some view that a party leadership review is internal; it's not for all Albertans. It's for those who are members of that party, and the rules they decide are the rules they decide.

One has to again ask the question – and maybe you can share this, Mr. Chair – of what the Attorney General's thinking was on this issue in the discussion you had with her. I need to understand because there are recommendations, it is my understanding, from the Chief Electoral Officer. Some of those recommendations have been accepted by the Attorney General, but it's also my understanding that some have not been. So just to get the complete story, with the utmost respect, is there a missing part to this discussion at this point in terms of the thinking of the Attorney General to bring it to this committee today? My question is to the chair.

The Chair: The minister wanted it to be an all-party recommendation from this committee to come to the House. She didn't want it to be a government recommendation, so she sent it to this committee to bring back a report to the House.

Mr. Boutilier: Right. Mr. Chair, I appreciate that, but the reality of it is that when we talk about all-party, I think we need to add clarity to "all-party" because the reality of it is it's government members who make up the majority of this committee. It is not a majority made up by other parties. So all-party does mean the government because the majority of the members are the government. Let's not fool ourselves on what all-party means. That's the government. You can have a vote right now and dispense with the discussions today, and the reality of it is the majority of government members will so decide. Let's not fool ourselves with "all-party."

The Chair: I guess we should decide as a committee, then. If we don't even want to address this issue, we can as a committee say back to the minister that we don't have to. Maybe that should be the first question, and if people on the committee say they don't want to be part of this discussion, then that's fine.

Ms Calahasen: Mr. Chair. I think we need to . . .

The Chair: I'm going to go down the speakers list, Ms Calahasen. Next on there was Mr. Chase.

Mr. Chase: Thank you for the opportunity. In the spirit of an all-party standing committee I'm trying to leave any vestiges of a particular prejudicial or partisan view away. But I want to, for the record, mention a couple of very important historical facts with regard to how wide we cast our net.

First, with regard to membership in parties, I think the figure is that less than 10 per cent of Alberta's population would actually be a card-carrying member of any party. Then if we go back to the 2008 election, barely 41 per cent of Albertans participated in the process. I think that has to be part of the motivation for the Solicitor General or the Minister of Justice to seek out this review.

Getting back, again, to the casting and the width of the net and how wide we cast, as Heather Forsyth previously mentioned – you can use the names in committees, so I'm not disobeying any rules here – we have the electronic conventions. We have the facility within this committee itself to put these points on a web page. We could ask for people to provide feedback, and that doesn't involve any travelling. It doesn't involve any expense other than it might allow Jody to get some overtime and Phil as well in terms of

screening. I would like to think that request would be made, however, in terms of, again, casting the net wide while not going out and having forums in each little community.

I can put it in a motion if that would speed up the process, but I do believe that an advertisement should go out in the dailies that receive the greatest amount of subscription on the part of Albertans with these questions that the hon. Minister of Justice has put forward to us. I mean, just think of how many times in OQP or in debate we've referenced the notion of a closed shop or a lack of transparency or these kinds of accusations. I'm taking the minister's word that she's wanting us to deal with these concerns. Again, I'll put it in a motion, if you think that would be helpful, to say that I would like these concerns to be put out in publications that have high readership to reach those people, seniors, for example, who don't necessarily have the electronic communication. So some way of getting this out. Would it help to put it as a motion? I want to facilitate the process.

The Chair: Anybody can bring up a motion, but I think we're still having a discussion here. If you want to bring a motion, we'll vote on it if you like.

Mr. Chase: Okay. I guess maybe, then, so that I'm not taking away from Guy's discussion, he brought up: is this something the committee should take on? For my two cents' worth I believe it's a worthwhile project, and I'd like to facilitate it by making sure that these questions get sent out as opposed to travelling road shows or other forms of communication.

The Chair: Maybe before we go further, should we ask the question of the committee, "Does this committee want to take on this project?" and do that first before we go any further? If the committee doesn't want to do it, we don't have to do it.

Mr. Hinman: May I speak before you debate that question?

The Chair: Okay. Well, we have a list here. I'll go down the list.

Mr. Hinman: Okay. I would like to speak to that question before it is voted on.

The Chair: We'll go to Mr. Cao next.

Mr. Cao: I was thinking of why, what, and how. I think the question that we were talking about was: do we need to do it or not? Why? That's what my hon. colleague Guy Boutilier mentioned. I think we have to decide on why and then what to do. I think there is at least a what here already if we agree with that, and now we're talking about how to do it. To tell you the truth, your how, my how, everybody's how is different, okay? So let's focus on the why and then the what here, and then we can talk about the how and how my how is different from your how for sure. I'm not going to fight to the death that my how should be the best one, all right? That's kind of my projection, logical thinking. I will end there and wait for the question, like the chair said, of why we need to do it.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Cao.

Next we have Dr. Brown.

Dr. Brown: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I want to say a couple of things here. I was impressed with the Member for Calgary-Fish Creek for what she said regarding the scope of the endeavour and the fact that we would probably be better off limiting our actual oral presentations and whatnot to the parties until she got onto the issue

of increasing public participation in the political process and dealing with the political malaise and whatnot.

I want to try to get this committee to focus in on the narrow issue that we have before us here: why did the electoral officer suggest that we adopt legislation regarding financial reporting by leadership candidates, and why did the minister refer that issue to us? I would say that it's a fairly simple issue. The issue is this: the perception may be that people can purchase political influence by making a contribution to a leadership candidate. Particularly if that leadership candidate ends up becoming the leader, there may be a perception that there are certain favours owed.

7:20

That's the narrow issue. Let's not get into all of these democracy groups that have a lot of criticisms about the democratic state of the province of Alberta or any other jurisdiction. Let's try to confine ourselves to this very narrow issue of whether or not we ought to have disclosure by leadership candidates and the reason for that.

I'm all for, as the Member for Calgary-Fish Creek said, soliciting via the Internet from whomever we determine are the stakeholders. And that could be as broad as we want it. If somebody wants to give us a written presentation, let them go ahead and do it. But I'm saying that this issue is very narrow. It's very clear what the purpose of it is. I think that if we undertake through the Internet some kind of a solicitation and we get our researcher to do some research into what other jurisdictions are doing or have done in this particular area, we can get to the meat of this issue in a fairly efficient manner.

I do disagree, with great respect, with my colleague from Calgary-Varsity with respect to advertising, and I will say why. When we had the Conflicts of Interest Act Review Committee, we did advertise in every paper in the province of Alberta. I can tell you that that is not only very expensive, but it's very inefficient. By and large, you don't get a lot of response from it. You will get far more response by directing an inquiry to a stakeholder that you have identified as somebody who has an interest in that and soliciting their input than you will by putting all the ads in the world on page 9 of the *Calgary Herald* or the *Calgary Sun* or the *Edmonton Journal* or the Grande Prairie-Wapiti whatever it is.

My view is that we should confine ourselves with respect to submissions to a very narrow endeavour, and that would be to the political parties, that we seek input – and I'm prepared to do a motion to that effect – from whomever we decide is a stakeholder, and then that we move on with this thing. It's a very, very narrow issue. It's whether or not somebody can be perceived as buying influence through the contribution to a leadership candidate and whether we should have disclosure and what type of disclosure we ought to have.

Those are my comments, Mr. Chair, and if you want, I'm prepared at some point to make a motion.

The Chair: Okay. Next on the list is Mrs. Forsyth.

Mrs. Forsyth: Oh. I follow Dr. Brown. How lovely.

I'm trying to find in this letter anywhere where it says that the reason the Justice minister wants us to look at these issues is because we clearly know it's buying political influence when you're giving money to a leader, and we're looking at the influence and how they're trying to sway them one way. I don't see that. It honestly doesn't say that anywhere. You said: buying influence to a political party or whatever you were saying. I'm sure it's in *Hansard*, so I'll have to read it again.

I appreciate what Dr. Brown has said. You know, I mentioned,

for example, that you could have your political parties here. I have no problem with that. You could have the leaders from all of the political parties. And I have no problem with seeking input as long as we have some input into who we could suggest could provide us with some good input into this.

For example, again, I hate going back to Manning, but he has the Manning Centre for Building Democracy. He would be a good person. You could pick Democracy Watch as one of the ones, I think.

Some Hon. Members: No.

Mrs. Forsyth: You're asking them for their input. I'm not asking for them to appear before the committee. I'm asking for their input to, you know, take five minutes of their time. I mean, Dr. Brown has just suggested that we look at seeking input from a very narrow group. Well I, quite frankly, think that they're an important part of democracy and accountability in this province. I'm not suggesting for a minute that we have all of Reboot or any of these guys come, but they certainly should have some input into spending 10 minutes.

If you're looking at this narrow definition, as Dr. Brown has suggested, then I think that it would be very valuable to have them take the time on a web page to put their input in. If you want to suggest that we just have the political leaders appear before the committee, that's fine. I agree with Dr. Brown in the fact that – sorry that I have to keep going back to the Alberta heritage savings trust fund. I can go back to a ton of committees that I've chaired in the past, and I've had the travelling road show. I know, quite frankly, how expensive it is to put all of these ads in the *Calgary Herald*, the *Edmonton Sun*, all of the little dailies to get this input. So I don't think we can or should do that.

Ms Calahasen: Sorry. Mr. Chair, can I have clarification?

The Chair: I can put you on the list, Ms Calahasen.

Ms Calahasen: Is it targeted?

The Chair: Do you want to be on the list?

Ms Calahasen: Sure.

The Chair: Okay. Next is Mr. Hinman, followed by Mr. Rogers.

Mr. Hinman: Well, thank you, Mr. Chairman. I appreciate being able to speak to this committee, realizing that I don't have a vote. I'm not worried about that. I think information is valuable.

The first thing I want to comment on is the value of the all-party committee. Mr. Boutilier is correct. We know where the majority is, but what's different about an all-party committee is, I want to say, the breadth of thought that comes forward that isn't in a government committee. I would not be allowed to speak at a government committee, nor Guy, many members here. So I think there's huge value in Ms Redford referring this to an all-party committee. That's the first thing that I want to address, that it absolutely should be an all-party committee because it totally changes the dynamics of the discussion on that.

I get kind of amused, I guess, by some of the comments, though, in the fact that maybe some parties don't want to be subject to the rules and regulations. If the government really wants to be narrow on this, which I don't think they do, they would just come up with this in their own party. Again, I'm going to push the limits, as it too often gets said that I do, but as I look at this, I don't think there's any

delusion that Minister Redford is a possible leadership candidate going down the road. So I think it's very valuable to turn this over to a committee so that people can't say: well, she had the direction on this. I think that this is good to turn this over to a committee to make that decision. It washes her hands somewhat for what may happen down the road.

I just wanted to go back. You know, Neil talked about that this is a very narrow issue. It may be, but it's a very, very deep crevice. You fall off of this and it's, in my opinion, a deadly fall. I want to just share a few of my experiences being a former leader of a political party and some of the dilemmas that you run up against. The Tories are a 40-year dynasty. Probably the thing that pushes my drive to be involved in politics more than anything else is the number of people and individuals that I come up against that say: "Well, we'd like to support. We'd like to do this, but we can't do it openly because we deal with the government."

I'm going to share a couple of things – again, these are just situations – on where the problem lies. I sat in a room with 10 gentlemen. Two individuals had donated \$20,000 to the party, \$10,000 each, and they brought in six of their friends and had a long discussion saying: you need to donate. This was for the 2008 election. "We need to get behind these guys. We've got to support them." After a 45-minute pitch, one of the individuals, the CEO of a small company, leaned forward and said: does our name not get put on a list if we donate to this party? The individual that had called said: absolutely. He was defiant. He was mad. He was very upset over the new royalty framework. The other guy leaned forward and used language that I would not want to use, describing on his mental capacity that he would donate to a party that's going up against this dynasty and says: do you have any idea of the consequences that will happen to you and your company when it goes on there? It's that thought of intimidation that goes on there.

7:30

I want to share another one, though. Two individuals who donated, again, put their name on the list, and it became public. This is going to come back to the fact of whether new people can come up in the leadership run or not. I'm just putting this to share with the committee. I'm not saying that we shouldn't because full disclosure is important, but I also want to say, you know, that when you talk about full disclosure, when it comes to a free vote in a democracy, it's a secret ballot, and if it isn't a secret ballot, it isn't a free vote. If other people can be there, it's intimidating.

When a government is in power, like this one is – I met two individuals that their job, how they make a living, is going after wildcat wells. There's a well with over \$10 million spent on this well, and the company walked away from it because the tool was broken down there. They said: we're not going to be prepared to spend \$2 million or \$3 million more to try and get this well. These individuals had a contract with the government. They were asked, you know, with Energy Alberta: do you want time, or do you want volume?

This is relevant, if you'll let me just wrap it up, please. Like, I just want it for consideration because this is a very deep crevice, and it's a struggle. I understand the importance of openness and transparency, but like I say, I don't want someone looking over my shoulder when I'm making the secret ballot. It's no longer a free vote. When you're going after a government that has been in power as long as it has here in Alberta, even the perception is wrong if people are intimidated because of that perception.

I'm sorry. The hon. Member for Lesser Slave Lake is moaning and groaning.

The Chair: Through the chair, please.

Mr. Hinman: Well, perhaps the moaning and groaning could be out in the hallways, then, if it's necessary.

Ms Calahasen: Well, you're the one moaning and groaning, for crying out loud.

Mr. Hinman: I'm not crying. I'm sharing the facts, and if you can't accept them, I understand that.

Ms Calahasen: Those are not the facts, Mr. Chair. I think I want to challenge that. Those are not facts. That is just your opinion on some of the information about the party itself. What we're trying to find here is . . .

Mr. Hinman: Does she have the floor, Mr. Chairman?

The Chair: No.

Ms Calahasen, just wait. You're on the list again later. You'll have your time.

Mr. Hinman: I'm just amazed that she would have the audacity to tell me it's not the facts.

Ms Calahasen: Mr. Chairman, I want to challenge that. That's really inappropriate.

The Chair: Stick to the points here.

Mr. Hinman: Thank you, Mr. Chair. We'll go back to it. Anyway, the intimidation factor is out there, and it's a problem. When people want to support a new leader, there is some value. I don't know whether that value is something that we should say that there is not enough value to be there in being able to donate to a leadership campaign because of the importance of the lines that are drawn. Even in the last provincial Tory leadership there was basically: you're on the wrong team, you're out there. So whether there's money behind – I take it that the chair wants to make a comment.

The Chair: Yeah. I mean, all we're trying to determine tonight is how this committee wants to proceed with this inquiry, so let's not have a debate about what we're going to come out with in the end. Tonight we're here to decide how we're going to proceed, and eventually I'm going to hopefully have a motion here on how we're going to take input into this committee.

Mr. Hinman: Okay. I appreciate that direction from the chair. Again, I guess I thought this is relevant on whether we're going to accept it or not. I appreciate the direction. I'll sum it up a little bit here, then.

There's a huge issue on this. I think the committee needs to look at it. The facts, perhaps, from the government's side aren't all there. The all-party committee is important because there'll be more facts, more ideas put on the table.

I think, to go back to Heather Forsyth's comment, I understand the cost of advertising. One of the things that the government needs to do better – and we need to engage Albertans – is to have a better web presence, where people know that these are on there. The people that want to participate, if they can go to a website, it's clear, you know: here are the committees that the government is involved in. I think there's a good way of allowing people. Eventually that word of mouth will pass on and get around.

I think it's also very important that we allow more than just a select group. One of the problems, I believe, of government is that too often they think that they're listening to all the people. They select the individuals they want to come forward. I think that's the value of the all-party. Again, putting the bulletin board out there – and I'm happy just with a website – to say that these are the government committees; this is what's going on. Eventually, Albertans will know, and if we need to advertise once in a while and say, "Hey, the committee website is this," I think that's effective in trying to get it out.

I think it's very important that we have this committee. I think that it needs to be public. We shouldn't be limiting it to the presentations unless we want to limit the outcome and the understanding of what is going on. I'm very much in favour of this. Like I say, we need to expand it to more than just the political parties that are in the province because most Albertans are not members of political parties, and maybe we should be asking why. Maybe they should have some input on why so few Albertans are part of a political party, let alone participate in a leadership race. I think that it will add a lot of dynamic and diversity to the discussion.

The Chair: Thank you.

Mr. Rogers, followed by Mr. Boutilier.

Mr. Rogers: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'm going to be brief because I want to address this just a little bit before I get to the process. The whole suggestion – and I go back to the hon. Member for Fort McMurray – that this all-party committee has no value because it has a majority of government members . . .

Mr. Boutilier: Mr. Chair, at no point did this member say that this committee had no value. As a point of clarification, at no time under the *Hansard* did this member say that this committee had no value. Those were your words. So I'd ask you to withdraw those words.

Mr. Rogers: Mr. Chairman, do I have the floor again?

The Chair: Yes.

Mr. Rogers: Thank you. I'm willing to withdraw those exact words, hon. member, but you questioned the value of this committee and the fact that it is made up of a majority of government members and that whatever we decide is a foregone conclusion, whether those were your exact words or not.

My point is this, hon. member and to the rest of the committee. If this all-party committee had no value or if all decisions are a foregone conclusion, then it would make sense that the opposition parties and independent members would just boycott the committee. I didn't particularly enjoy the last discourse by the hon. Member for Calgary-Glenmore, but the fact that we have this committee allowed him to make those points.

I would suggest, Mr. Chairman, following up on Dr. Brown's point, that our task is clear. The task that we've been charged with by the minister is clear, and I would hope that by way of motions and some more discussion we would clearly lay out a path of how we're going to proceed. There was a suggestion that we might want to just not do anything. I would maybe look to our staff, Parliamentary Counsel for example. I would think that would be an abdication of our role, and I think we run the risk of being in contempt of the House if we would just decide to not respond to a task that's been given to this committee. I would hope that we don't go down that road and move forward in trying to lay out a process as to how we would get this task done.

Thank you.

The Chair: Next is Mr. Boutilier, followed by Mr. Chase.

Mr. Boutilier: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I appreciate the member's comments relative to a point of clarification on what my words were.

I'd like to be quite brief. The comments made by Dr. Brown and followed up by the Member for Leduc-Beaumont-Devon infer that it is a very clear and narrow focus of what is required. Those comments are based on the government member, the Attorney General, on the letter that she has provided.

We are a standing legislative committee. We just don't jump to the beat of a letter from a minister. We are independent thinkers, all of us on this committee. Consequently, the breadth and the scope of what this standing committee will determine and decide in terms of where we go – I believe that I could not disagree more with the idea that this is a narrow scope. That's a narrow scope based on the government Attorney General's letter, but it doesn't mean that this standing committee doesn't have the wherewithal and the intellectual capacity to determine what the actual discussion will be and what this committee will determine to be the scope of the discussion.

7:40

My only point, with all due respect, is to the comments about: it's clear, it's precise, based on the letter from the government. Mr. Chairman, it is this committee who will decide the direction we go. I'd only ask for the consideration by all members from all parties that it is not the Attorney General who determines what the scope of this committee is. It is the legislative members who belong to this committee who will determine that, not solely the letter from the Attorney General. That is my point I wanted to add as clarity.

Thank you.

The Chair: Thank you.

Mr. Chase, followed by Ms Calahasen.

Mr. Chase: Thank you. I realize that maybe I should save the discussion about the narrowness of the scope and focus. Maybe I'll do that and put forward a motion that our committee agree to carry out the proposals of the Justice minister as requested because unless we establish and we are in agreement that we should go forward with doing what has been requested, there is not much point in any further discussion. So at whatever point, Parliamentary Counsel, I would be permitted to make that motion, I would like to do so. I can repeat it if necessary.

The Chair: Sure. If you would like to make a motion, any member can do that at any time, so go ahead.

Mr. Chase: Okay. I would move that

the members of this committee support the request from the Justice minister in looking into the leadership campaign concerns that she has outlined.

The Chair: Thank you.

Any further discussion on that motion? Mr. Boutilier.

Mr. Boutilier: Yes. Just some questions to the member, to the chair, and to members of the committee. I would ask the hon. member who put forward the motion if there is any additional scope from the perspective that this member brings that he would like to see added in the form of the motion, or is it exactly as written by the Attorney General? Are there any other thoughts relative to that in terms of the goal that is trying to be achieved here by this legislative committee reporting to the Assembly?

Mr. Chase: I appreciate the clarification. I share your concerns, but I believe we have to have a starting point, and to me the request that has been made by the Minister of Justice is, in fact, a starting point. It may not be the end-all and be-all. We may, as the committee desires and discusses, pursue the matter further, but this is sort of a jumping-off point. It's a request, so I'd like to call the question.

The Chair: Okay. With that, I'll call the question. All in favour of the motion? Opposed? Carried. Thank you, Mr. Chase.

Next is Ms Calahasen.

Ms Calahasen: I was going to talk on that other issue, so I'm done for now. I'll talk about the other stuff.

The Chair: Okay.

I think, to get us back on track here, we need to answer some questions. What kind of information and research support does the committee need to proceed with this inquiry? Who would the committee like to hear from?

Dr. Brown: I'd like to make a motion, Mr. Chairman, following on the course, I believe, of the Member for Calgary-Fish Creek. If you'd permit me to make a motion, and then we can maybe discuss the breadth and the width of the endeavour. I'd like to move that we authorize research and communications staff of this committee to make a list of all relevant stakeholders and solicit input on the issue of financial reporting from candidates for leadership and, secondly, that we ask our research staff to gather information on rules from other jurisdictions and that we meet again subsequent to gathering that information.

The Chair: Okay. So you want the research committee to put together a list of stakeholders.

Dr. Brown: And any input.

The Chair: And where they want to advertise.

Dr. Brown: No, no. I didn't say anything about advertising.

The Chair: Okay. Any discussion on that motion? Mr. Chase.

Mr. Chase: I have no problem with the motion, providing these are two directives as opposed to limiting statements as to how we go further. I would like to think that each member here, including our visiting participants, would be able to suggest to Dr. Phil Massolin who they would specifically like to be contacted. I've got great faith in Dr. Massolin based on his research for Public Accounts, for example, but I would like to think that we could offer suggestions that he would then use as part of his contact list if that's a friendly amendment.

Mrs. Forsyth: That was my comment, that we can provide some names if we think they're relevant to what we're trying to find.

Dr. Brown: I have no difficulty whatsoever with the research staff, then, taking suggestions on who those stakeholders might be.

My purpose is that – and I don't see it as limiting the overall scope, as Mr. Hinman has suggested – I think once we have gathered that information regarding other jurisdictions, regarding all those stakeholders that we identify, then we meet again. We can see whether or not we believe that we've got all the tools that we need to proceed further. If we don't, maybe we want to do something else

with respect to solicitations. I'm suggesting that you're going to get an awful lot of information, a lot of good information by going out there and asking for it.

Mrs. Forsyth: I don't want to argue with my colleague because I know where he's going. I just think there's a big difference between appropriate consultation versus targeted consultation. You know, we're starting off with a targeted consultation, and if we start seeing it moving from that targeted consultation to a much bigger scope where we feel we need to do some appropriate consultation, then I think that needs to be done. Quite frankly, I think once you start suggesting some of the groups, you're going to see: why are you limiting it just to the leadership? As long as we're aware of that, and it's on the record.

The Chair: So just to clarify, then, the motion is that the research staff will bring back to this committee a list of stakeholders.

Dr. Brown: And the committee members may suggest stakeholders to our research staff.

The Chair: But we won't send out any requests yet.

Dr. Brown: No. Then we also ask our research staff to bring back information on other jurisdictions and what the rules are for leadership campaigns in other parties, in other jurisdictions, and so on. I think at that point, once we have that information, we could decide whether we want half a dozen people to come and give us presentations or none or 20. I mean, at that point we will see whether we have all the necessary tools to get the job done.

Mrs. Forsyth: Just one more comment, please, before we move on if I may. And please excuse me for my ignorance. I'm new on this committee, and I'm not familiar with this Standing Order 52.07(2). If I recall, when I briefly asked about the responsibility of the committee, under this letter from the minister you have a six-month window. I think it's very important that if we want to either do this targeted consultation or appropriate consultation and our mandate gets a little bigger, by this section we have to stay within that consultation, period. So I think we have to have some timelines in regard to: do we want to have – am I right? Yeah. I see nodding. We need to have the targeted consultation within the next three months. That allows us three months to expand if we have to expand it all of a sudden if you want, you know, leaders of the parties. I don't want to lose that timeline of the six months and then all of a sudden somebody says: whoops, we've run out of time.

7:50

The Chair: Okay. I'll let you comment.

Mr. Reynolds: Just to follow up on Mrs. Forsyth's point, the deadline for submitting the report would be October 13. The deadline under the standing orders is that the inquiry must be completed not later than six months after the commencement of the inquiry. I would take today's meeting to be the commencement of the inquiry. Six months from today would be October 13.

The Chair: I think with that we need to proceed fairly quickly, and I would think the research staff could put that together fairly quickly. That's not going to take long. I would think a couple of weeks or a week or something, right?

Dr. Massolin: Excuse me, Mr. Chair. For the stakeholders list and the cross-jurisdictional comparison?

The Chair: Yes.

Dr. Massolin: Yeah. A couple of weeks, I would think.

The Chair: Okay. I don't want to drag it out too long, or we won't get done. So a couple of weeks, and then we can bring that list back to this committee?

Dr. Massolin: Yes, certainly.

The Chair: Okay. Mr. Rogers.

Mr. Rogers: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I just need a clarification on that list because in Dr. Brown's motion he didn't mention the registered political parties. Now, maybe that goes without saying that we're not dealing with them in this, or maybe it's important that that list be a part of what's being brought back, Dr. Brown. I think it's important. I believe there are eight, but frankly I don't know who they all are. I think at least we should have the list, and then we'll determine where we go. I think it's important that that list of registered political parties be included, and then we take from there where we go with the information that we've got. I think it's important that that be included.

The Chair: Yeah. I would assume those will be the first ones on your list, I think, the registered parties.

Okay. Any other discussion?

Mr. Chase: I just wondered if there's any other clarification required prior to us voting on Neil's amended motion with George's clarification. If there isn't, I would call the question.

The Chair: Okay. Call the question?

Mr. Boutilier: Just one final note. I don't want to delay, but my observation is that when it is written pursuant to Standing Order 52.07, unless someone is carrying their Legislative Assembly handbook with them in their pocket at that time, it would be extremely helpful for members that when the pursuant standing order is made reference to in a letter, perhaps some brevity on what the pursuant order is making reference to. I know as a former Municipal Affairs minister I didn't always carry the Municipal Government Act with me every day.

Mr. Chase: Could it potentially be read into the record for clarification purposes?

Mr. Rogers: It probably has been a couple of times.

Mr. Boutilier: What 52.07 means?

The Chair: Do you want in writing now or at the next meeting, or do you want Mr. Reynolds to read it in today? He did once.

Mr. Chase: Oh, okay. Sorry.

Mr. Boutilier: Sending me a copy would be helpful and maybe to all members.

The Chair: The committee clerk will send a copy to all members. Any further discussion on the question?

Hon. Members: Question.

The Chair: Okay. Question. All in favour?

Hon. Members: Agreed.

The Chair: Opposed? Carried.

Okay. We do have a couple other items to deal with on the agenda. We have some presentation requests. The committee originally had a meeting scheduled for February 8. However, the sessional schedule required this meeting to be cancelled. Two presentations were scheduled for this meeting, and we have received a request from another group interested in appearing before this committee. The first request was the safe communities initiative. There was a motion to hear a presentation from them in February. Do we want to still hear that presentation? It's up to the committee.

Mrs. Forsyth: I think we should, yes. They're spending millions of dollars on that SafeCom, and I think it would be very interesting.

The Chair: Do we need a motion? Or I'll just take consensus that we will schedule those hearings.

Mr. Boutilier: I have just one question on the point, and that is: would the Attorney General have met with this safe community committee first?

Mrs. Forsyth: It comes under her. They report to her. It's under the task force.

Dr. Brown: It's a cross-ministry initiative.

The Chair: Both the Solicitor General and Attorney General would make a joint presentation to the committee, so if we schedule a meeting for this, bring this information back, I'll schedule a presentation for them at the same time. Is that all right with the committee?

Hon. Members: Agreed.

The Chair: Okay. That should be all we need.

Mr. Rogers: We have those other two groups.

The Chair: There are the two we dealt with. Then we have the one from registry agents, but we will not be meeting with them. The Alberta Centre for Injury Control & Research: we had that request, and we did agree to meet with them before. Would this committee still like to entertain that?

Mr. Rogers: Can we add that to the same meeting, Mr. Chairman?

The Chair: I think so. It's only a 10-minute presentation, so we should be able to.

Mr. Xiao: Are we going to meet with the Association of Alberta Registry Agents or not?

The Chair: No. We just got a request from them to do that. It was never scheduled before. I checked with the minister. Right now they're in the process of going through a consultation between the minister and the association, so it wouldn't be appropriate at this time to meet with them. Maybe after they've done their meetings and consultations.

Mrs. Forsyth: Just if I may, Chair – and I’m at your will – the Association of Alberta Registry Agents is facing a very difficult time with some of the things that the minister is presenting in opening up the registries. I mean, I’ve heard from quite a few of them. I’m at your will if the minister has said it’s a difficult time because they’re in the middle of a consultation process. Through what came down on the standing committee, I think they made a presentation, or something was happening at that standing committee.

The Chair: They have meetings with the minister next week, I think on the 19th, so we’ll let him go through that process. Then if there’s a need, we can meet with them after.

Mrs. Forsyth: Sure. I’m fine with that.

Mr. Chase: This is an assumption, but correct me if I’m wrong. I’m assuming that as chair of the committee you’ll write to this organization who requested the opportunity to present and explain why at this time that presentation isn’t possible and provide reasoning and then share it with the members. I’m assuming that’s standard procedure.

The Chair: Yeah.

Mr. Chase: Thank you.

The Chair: Is there any other business the committee wishes to raise?

Mr. Chase: While the members are here, do we have any kind of a sense or an offered date as to when we would meet again just so that it can be passed along to my colleagues, who would most likely be present at that next meeting?

The Chair: Well, I don’t know. I’m thinking that a couple of weeks in we’ll have to deal with the researchers, but to try and pick a date tonight might be hard. I think the clerk will pull . . .

Dr. Brown: Mr. Chairman, I need some clarification here, then, because you’re suggesting that we need to meet before those solicitations have gone out. That was not my understanding.

The Chair: That’s what you said. You told them to bring back a list of research.

Dr. Brown: No. We would have input into the list, but it was not my feeling that it was necessary to meet to review the list of stakeholders. My suggestion was that their research staff would compile that list with the assistance and input of anybody that wants to have input from the committee. They would simply put that list together and then go ahead and do the solicitation. Then we would meet after we got the feedback. But I don’t think it’s necessary for us to meet simply to go over the list of stakeholders.

Mr. Rogers: That was my idea, though.

Mrs. Forsyth: Maybe as a member of the opposition and as the former chair of the Alberta heritage savings trust fund, I can make a comment. It’s very, very difficult to try and get people all together. Jody, help me if I’m wrong, or it could have been you. When we were doing the consultation list in regard to who we were going to reach out to on the Alberta heritage savings trust fund, we sent a memo out to all the members. It said: “Have you got everything? Do you feel we’ve compiled enough? Do you want to

add anything?” We asked for members of the committee to let the research division know, if I remember, and that worked out fairly well. That was also an all-party committee. I’m okay with that.

I know everybody is busy. When I was in the government, the CPCs were meeting, you know, kind of regularly. I don’t know if you meet regularly, but can we keep these meetings, like, once a month, on a Tuesday or something so that we kind of know that as we go through this process?

8:00

The Chair: Okay. Well, that’s not the impression I had from the motion; I’m sorry. So then the committee will compile their list and send out the requests for written submissions back to this committee. Is that what I’m hearing?

Dr. Brown: Right, and when those have come back, then we would meet and decide where we go from there and decide whom we might want to invite to come make presentations and see what the next step would be.

I think we should ask Dr. Massolin to give us input on what timeline he thinks he could accomplish that in, and then we would set our next meeting based on that, whether it’s six weeks, seven weeks, whatever.

Dr. Massolin: Right. I can speak to that because I think that’s an important point. If the committee is going to go that route, the first step is to of course develop the stakeholder list. That means receiving input back from the committee in a timely way, perhaps within a week’s time frame, so that we can finalize the list, perhaps working with the chair and the deputy chair, and then send out the stakeholder letter outlining how we want the stakeholders to respond and giving a certain time frame for that response. Now, that’s up to the committee, of course, but I would think that in the past it’s been about – what? – a three- to four-week timeline there, so we’re roughly at about five to six weeks at this point. Then we’d have maybe a week to summarize those submissions, and then the committee could meet at that point if that’s reasonable.

The Chair: Around the middle of June.

Dr. Massolin: Right, a middle to end of June time frame.

The Chair: Okay. Is everybody clear on that? Maybe I should have a motion that the chair be authorized to approve the final list of stakeholders and that an invitation be sent out to identified stakeholders advising them of the inquiry intended by the Standing Committee on Public Safety and Services, just so somebody can approve the list. I can do it with the deputy chair.

Mrs. Forsyth: I don’t have a problem with that, Mr. Chair, as long as it’s recognized that you’re not approving a list and then all of a sudden if I say, “We want to see Democracy Watch” or something, you say, “No, I don’t want it to take part.” You know, if we have input into the list, if you haven’t heard from Heather Forsyth from the Wildrose when you’ve said that the date to put forward names is, we’ll say May 1, whatever, and I haven’t responded and you say “Oh, well, you lose; you had that opportunity” – as long as everybody has input, I’m fine with that.

The Chair: Okay. We’ll send the notice around and give you a date.

Mr. Cao: I think that I could say that every one of us as MLAs has

been chairman of this or that committee's consultation experience in the past. I think we always rely on the working groups that do the work. We sort of look at what we've heard, and then we discuss how we could respond. I think that's a process out there. I think that rather than us getting involved in the detail work and then clogging up the process – I've seen so many committees that we've been through and that are working well. The staff go out with what we've heard, and then we look at the result, and then we decide.

The other thing that I'm worried about a bit is if each one of us sends in a list. Being politicians, we tend to send in a list that's our friends, favours, or whatever, and then it becomes a long list. We have to be very careful: "I wonder. Do we include him?" I can write a letter to them saying that they are included in this so that we score some credit with them and all that. We have to be careful here. This is, again, a focus, a study. Most of the work is done by the staff here, so we don't need to get them involved in so much that they swim in it. We have to be careful. The essence of it is to get to the bottom line of this "what" that I said here.

Thank you.

Mrs. Forsyth: I don't want to prolong this, but, you know, sometimes people keep walking, and then all of a sudden they're walking in. To suggest that some people might have a longer list than others, all of a sudden it gets the hair on the back of my neck standing up. We're talking right now about a targeted consultation, and that's what the list is going to do. After we see the results of the targeted consultation, then we'll look at: we may or may not be doing an appropriate consultation. I'm certainly not as a member of the Wildrose going to send it to my flower shop and say: gee, would you like to? I can think of some groups that I would like to see, and I've mentioned the Manning centre for democracy. I don't know a lot about this Democracy Watch group, that's all of a sudden e-mailing us things. Some political scientists that we see on TV all the time are commenting in regard to, you know, the things that are happening in the province. I think those are the groups that I would consider for a targeted consultation: political scientists, maybe some economists. Who knows?

Ms Calahasen: Mr. Chair, could I just get clarification, please? With the motion that's gone out, are there not registered political parties that will be coming?

The Chair: Yes.

Ms Calahasen: That's our first choice.

The Chair: Yeah. That's what we said.

Ms Calahasen: Thank you.

The Chair: Okay. A motion, Mr. Rogers?

Mr. Rogers: Were we still trying to get that motion for you to finalize the list? I think it goes without saying, Mr. Chairman, that you work with the staff to finalize the list.

Dr. Brown: We take all suggestions.

Mr. Rogers: Yeah, we take all the suggestions. I don't think we need a motion. You'll work with the staff to finalize the list, and life goes on.

The Chair: Would you move that motion first?

Mr. Rogers: Do we need that motion?

Mrs. Forsyth: You know what? To have everything up and up, if the chair would like to read that motion into the record, and then we'll vote. I'm sure that will make everything happy.

The Chair: That

the chair be authorized to approve the final list of stakeholders and that an invitation be sent to identify stakeholders, advising them of the inquiry initiated by the Standing Committee on Public Safety and Services.

Moved by Heather. Any discussion on it?

Mr. Chase: We've got two conflicting ideas going. We've said that anyone can submit names for the researchers to consider, and then we've got a conflicting motion which puts the authority in the chair to decide which of the names that have been forwarded.

The Chair: After they've been sent in, I'll look at the list.

Mrs. Forsyth: If I may, Mr. Chase, I clarified that with the chair. I said that I was uncomfortable with him having final approval. The committee is going to send a list that they think should be recognized. They'll send it to you; they'll send it to me. They'll say: do you see any omissions, additions, or deletions, anything you think needs to be added? That's when you and I will respond and say: well, gee, you forgot stakeholder A, stakeholder B, stakeholder C.

Mr. Chase: So nobody will be cancelled from the list of requests.

Mrs. Forsyth: No.

Mr. Chase: With that established, that was my concern. Thank you.

The Chair: Unless there's something right off the wall, but I'll talk to you. I wouldn't cancel it.

I'm going to call the question on that motion, please. All in favour? One opposed: Ms Calahasen. Anybody else opposed? Just the one? Okay.

Any other business?

8:10

Dr. Brown: Do we have a date, Mr. Chair, for the next meeting?

The Chair: The committee clerk is going to poll the members. We're talking middle to end of June. If we're going to try and come up with a date tonight, we'll be here for another hour because of: what date do you want?

Mr. Chase: I don't want to prolong, but Heather made a valid point, and that was that we have to have a cut-off date for Phil's research. Is it in the record anywhere as to how long we could continue to feed suggestions to Phil? Do you have a date in mind where you'd like to cut it off? As party whip I want to bring it to my caucus members and let them know what is an achievable date for you to receive suggestions.

Dr. Massolin: I think that within a week or thereabouts would be reasonable.

Mr. Chase: Preferably within a week. Okay. Thank you.

The Chair: Not from the stakeholder, just for the list, you mean.

Dr. Massolin: Just for the list. I mean, it's obviously up to the committee, but I would think, you know, that in terms of getting the ball rolling, you wouldn't want to wait too much longer than a week to get feedback so that we can incorporate it into the list, get it approved, send it out, and expedite the process.

Mr. Rogers: I leave it to his discretion to send the stuff out and get it back based on his working timelines. Let's not get involved in that.

The Chair: Okay. Any other business? No? Okay.

Mrs. Forsyth: I'd make a motion to adjourn, please.

The Chair: I have a motion from Heather to adjourn. All in favour? Thank you.

[The committee adjourned at 8:11 p.m.]

