

**ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE
LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL**

**FEBRUARY 23, 2022
7:00 AM**

MEMBERS PRESENT

Representative Sara Hannan, Chair
Senator Lora Reinbold, Vice Chair
Representative Matt Claman
Representative Bryce Edgmon
Representative Neal Foster
Representative Louise Stutes
Representative Cathy Tilton
Representative Chris Tuck
Senator Click Bishop
Senator Shelley Hughes (alternate)
Senator Peter Micciche
Senator Mike Shower
Senator Bert Stedman
Senator Gary Stevens

MEMBERS ABSENT

Senator Lyman Hoffman

OTHER MEMBERS PRESENT

Senator Jesse Kiehl
Senator David Wilson

AGENDA

APPROVAL OF AGENDA
APPROVAL OF MINUTES
COMMITTEE BUSINESS - EXECUTIVE SESSION
COMMITTEE BUSINESS

SPEAKER REGISTER

Jessica Geary, Executive Director, Legislative Affairs
Agency (LAA)
JC Kestel, Procurement Officer, LAA
Wayne Jensen, Architect/President, Jensen Yorba Wall

[7:01:27 AM](#)

I. CALL TO ORDER

CHAIR HANNAN called the Legislative Council meeting to order at 7:02am in the House Finance Committee Room. Present at the call were: Representatives Claman, Edgmon, Foster, Hannan, Stutes, Tilton, Tuck; Senators Bishop, Micciche, Hughes, Shower, Stedman, Stevens, Reinbold.

Senator Hoffman was absent.

Fourteen members present.

II. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

[7:04:12 AM](#)

VICE-CHAIR REINBOLD moved and asked unanimous consent that Legislative Council approve the agenda as presented.

The agenda was approved without objection.

III. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

[7:04:33 AM](#)

VICE-CHAIR REINBOLD moved and asked unanimous consent that Legislative Council approve the minutes dated October 5, 2021, October 26, 2021, and December 16, 2021, as presented.

The minutes were approved without objection.

IV. COMMITTEE BUSINESS-EXECUTIVE SESSION

CHAIR HANNAN explained the following items will require an Executive Session: briefing on litigation regarding the Alaska Higher Education Investment Fund, the forward funding of education, HB 69 effective date, and approval of a Juneau Warehouse storage space lease.

[7:04:44 AM](#)

VICE-CHAIR REINBOLD moved that Legislative Council go into Executive Session under Uniform Rule 22(B)(1), discussion of matters, the immediate knowledge of which would adversely affect the finances of a government unit 22(B)(3), discussion of a matter that may, by law, be required to be confidential. The following people may remain in the room or online: Jessica Geary, JC Kestel, Santé Lesh, Megan Wallace, Emily Nauman, Helen Phillips,

-DRAFT-

Jodie Murdock, Bree Wylie, Shannon Easterly, legislators not on Legislative Council, and any staff of a Legislative Council member.

7:05:53 AM

A roll call vote was taken.

YEAS: Representatives Claman, Edgmon, Foster, Stutes, Tilton, Tuck, Hannan; Senators Bishop, Micciche, Hughes, Shower, Stedman, Stevens, Reinbold.

NAYS: None.

The motion passed 14-0.

7:06:55 AM

Council goes into Executive Session.

7:28:26 AM

Council comes out of Executive Session.

A roll call vote was taken to establish quorum, fourteen members present

Brief at ease.

IV. COMMITTEE BUSINESS CONTINUED

a. Juneau Warehouse Storage Space Lease

7:30:07 AM

VICE-CHAIR Reinbold moved that Legislative Council authorize the Legislative Affairs Agency to secure a lease for the Juneau warehouse space with Alaska Legacy Partners LLC for a five-year lease and two optional five-year renewals.

JC KESTEL, Procurement Officer with the Legislative Affairs Agency, said the Agency received four proposals for warehouse space. The Agency recommended a contract award to Alaska Legacy Partners LLC for a warehouse in the Shaune Drive area and requested Legislative Council approve a lease agreement for an initial five-year term with two optional five-year renewals at \$5,400 per month with annual increases of 1.5 percent. The proposed lease exceeded \$50,000 in one fiscal year so Legislative Council's approval was required.

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CHAIR HANNAN, seeing no questions from members, asked for a roll call vote on the motion.

7:31:24 AM

A roll call vote was taken.

YEAS: Representatives Claman, Edgmon, Foster, Hannan, Stutes, Tilton, Tuck, Hannan; Senators Micciche, Hughes, Shower, Stedman, Stevens, Reinbold.

NAYS: Senator Bishop.

The motion passed 13-1.

V. COMMITTEE BUSINESS

a. Legislative Council/Legislature FY23 Budget

7:32:35 AM

VICE-CHAIR REINBOLD moved that Legislative Council per AS 24.20.130 submit the FY23 proposed Legislative Council budget to the House and Senate Finance Committees for review and action.

CHAIR HANNAN objected for purposes of discussion and asked Ms. Geary to come forward and summarize the budget proposal.

JESSICA GEARY, Executive Director of the Legislative Affairs Agency, said before members is the Legislative Council FY23 proposed budget and sectional narrative that details each section of the budget. She continued that Legislative Council is responsible for authorizing and submitting this to the Finance Committees. She said she would highlight significant items and is pleased to answer any questions.

Ms. Geary noted that in the previous fiscal year, LAA staff worked a combined total of more than ten thousand hours of overtime, which is the equivalent of just over five full-time positions. She said some employees reached the annual limit of one-hundred-fifty hours of comp time, so the extra hours required to complete their job duties were essentially donated after reaching this limit. She explained that most additional work was a result of the four special sessions and the pandemic.

Ms. Geary continued that in FY16 the Agency received large cuts, had been flat funded since, and staff are

supporting new services for the Legislature, such as added cyber security measures, mandatory changes in the State payroll and accounting systems, integration of Microsoft Teams, as well as phone and tv services no longer provided by outside entities that now need to be maintained in-house. Additionally, while many in the Executive Branch received cost of living increases over the past five years, the Legislature has not had one since 2015. These factors have led to low morale, employee burnout, and impacted recruitment and retention, and we are coming to the Legislature this year for more resources.

Ms. Geary said this request adds four new positions, three in IT and one in Personnel, as well as funding for cyber security tools and two structural changes to add two new allocations for more accurate and transparent budgeting. She noted that overall there would be no increase to the allocations and that LAA was able to take advantage of an increase it received [in FY22] to cover a higher PERS rate. By utilizing those funds, LAA does not have to request an increase in the authorization. There is a modest increase of \$100,000 for the Ombudsman to support existing workloads.

SENATOR STEDMAN requested a breakdown of the incremental costs, particularly the special session and pandemic costs. He said he thought the special sessions held by the governor were a waste of time and was curious of the financial burden it had put on Alaska's budgets.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR GEARY said she would be happy to provide those figures to the committee.

SENATOR STEVENS asked why funding phone and IT services is now needed and who previously provided them.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR GEARY said that the Executive Branch Office of Information Technology (OIT) used to provide phone services. With OIT moving to Microsoft Teams for their phone service, they will not be providing any support to the Legislature regardless of if LAA decided to switch to the Teams phone service. LAA will be replacing the current phones with similar hardware, but through ACS.

Ms. Geary noted the phone service through the Executive Branch was just under two-hundred-thousand dollars a year. She said adding a position and paying for a new

service provides a net savings for the Legislature. The cable tv service was previously provided by GCI. GCI is now using only streaming services which needs IT support.

REPRESENTATIVE CLAMAN said he had heard many complaints about the time it takes for bills to be drafted and amendments to be written coming from Legal Services. He noted some offices have more of a workload than others. He felt that Legal Services is understaffed. Not seeing any measures of an increase, he recognized there are recruiting issues for LAA as well as the Executive branch.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR GEARY said the Legal Services budget had long term employees retire, which led to more funding in the budget. Legal Services has hired some positions, and has one more that is still open, however, it is challenging to onboard a new worker during Session. She continued that with it being specialized work, it takes significant training. She said LAA is evaluating what it can do to assist Legal Services, be it through Legislative Council Policy or other measures. While this is not specifically reflected in the budget, we are aware of the problem and know it must be addressed.

CHAIR HANNAN, seeing no further questions, requested a roll call vote on the motion.

7:43:07 AM

A roll call vote was taken.

YEAS: Representatives Claman, Edgmon, Hannan Foster, Stutes, Tilton, Tuck, Senators Bishop Micciche, Hughes, Shower, Stedman, Stevens, Reinbold.

NAYS: None.

The motion passed 14-0.

**b. Assembly Building Utilization Subcommittee
Recommendation**

7:43:53 AM

VICE-CHAIR REINBOLD moved that the Legislative Council approve the Assembly Building Utilization Subcommittee proposal to convert the Assembly Building to residential space for the purpose of legislative housing. She further moved that the Legislative Council approve a project budget not to exceed five-million, five-hundred-thousand

dollars in existing capital funds; of which two-hundred-fifty thousand dollars will be used to retain Jensen Yorba Wall Inc., for design services.

CHAIR HANNAN objected for purposes of discussion and asked Ms. Geary and Wayne Jensen, Architect and President of Jensen Yorba Wall Inc., to summarize the Subcommittee's recommendations and take questions.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR GEARY said the Assembly Building Utilization Subcommittee held several meetings to discuss various options for plans and decided that utilizing the Assembly Building for housing purposes would be the best option. She said LAA worked with Mr. Jensen on conceptual floor plans and the preferred plan allowed for eleven apartments on each floor, for a total of thirty-three units. She said this is a combination of one-bedroom and efficiency units.

Ms. Geary continued that each floor would have a common laundry utility room and room for electrical and communications equipment. This proposal is detailed in a memo from Jensen Yorba Wall which goes through the proposed plan floor by floor and the overall construction budget. The proposed budget of five and a half million dollars includes the design, any asbestos abatement based on the studies done to date, construction, basically all start-to-finish costs. She stated that she, Wayne Jensen, and some members of the Subcommittee were available for questions.

REPRESENTATIVE CLAMAN asked if the floor plan will be the same for all three floors or will they see more floor plans later.

WAYNE JENSEN, Architect and President at Jensen Yorba Wall, said it will be the same basic floor plan for all three floors. The first floor will have small differences because of the main entrance to the building. Eleven apartment units on each of the three floors for a total of thirty-three units.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR GEARY added that the current handout the committee has is not the exact floor plan chosen, it is just similar for furniture layout purposes.

REPRESENTATIVE CLAMAN said his handout shows six to seven one bedrooms and four studios.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR GEARY stated the handout he has is a temporary floor plan laid out with furniture. Mr. Jensen's staff did not have time to add furniture for the actual floor plan.

SENATOR STEVENS asked about the parking situation for the building.

MR. JENSEN said it would remain as it is with fourteen spaces.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR GEARY corrected and said there are seventeen spaces, but some are used for storage. Once current tenants vacate the building, LAA will know how many spaces are usable.

REPRESENTATIVE TILTON asked how much the architect's consultation was and how was it contracted out to do.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR GEARY said Mr. Jensen sits on the advisory committee that donated the Assembly Building to the Legislature. The Subcommittee was appointed and several meetings were held with Mr. Jensen to develop the plans. Existing procurement authority of the Chair helped to develop those plans. The motion is to accept the recommendation of the Subcommittee and to approve the construction budget.

REPRESENTATIVE TILTON asked to be reminded of who the members of the Subcommittee are. She also stated there was no memo on the Subcommittee's recommendations.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR GEARY said Chair Hannan was the Chair of that Subcommittee, and members were Senators Stedman, Bishop, Kiehl, and Representatives Tuck and Edgmon. She confirmed there was no memo on the Subcommittee's decisions and said Chair Hannan may have more insight on this inquiry.

CHAIR HANNAN said the Subcommittee was formed by the Legislative Council on September 23, 2021 and met three times. Discussions about the Assembly Building's use are what formed today's recommendation.

REPRESENTATIVE TUCK said at the Subcommittee's last meeting there was a floor plan that demonstrated possible tenant use on the second and third floors with LAA use on the ground floor. Due to remodel costs to remove existing infrastructure inside the Assembly Building, the

Subcommittee decided to do the least amount of remodeling possible.

CHAIR HANNAN put on the record that Senators Wilson and Kiehl are present.

REPRESENTATIVE TILTON said when the Legislature gave legislative staff a stipend, the rental market went up according to the amount of the stipend. She asked if the Subcommittee considered what the cost of the units would be and how does the Legislature plan on competing with the private sector.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR GEARY said the housing does not exist in the private sector, so this project allows legislators to find housing without interfering with conducting legislative business. The rental rate will be a policy decision that will likely be based on the going market rate. She noted that legislator per diem could potentially be reduced by the rental amount, but that also would be a policy decision.

She said when this initial concept was presented to the Mayor of Juneau, the Mayor was more interested in the project taking place than worried about competing with the private sector. It is not a concern in this community. She agreed that some decisions still must be made regarding the finer details.

CHAIR HANNAN put on the record that past and present community leaders have all been supportive and engaged with the Juneau Community Foundation and encouraged the purchase and gifting of the Assembly Building to the Legislature, specifically for times when housing is unavailable.

REPRESENTATIVE EDGMON said the decision comes from the Subcommittee to Council with a predetermination aspect. It was his recollection that Council was to decide, then send that decision to the Subcommittee. Nearly half of the Legislature flies north for weekends. He speculated that having dorm housing would encourage that kind of activity.

He asked if the Legislature has done a survey with employees to see how many would be interested in dorm-like housing. He said it seems there have been steps skipped within the process. Regarding Representative

Tilton's questions, it seems they have been answered, but with thirty-three units that are otherwise provided.

CHAIR HANNAN stated she thought she had appointed a Subcommittee to produce recommendations for Council.

REPRESENTATIVE CLAMAN concurred with Representative Edgmon in that having private housing is preferable over dorms. Regarding rent prices, Representative Claman's staff saw no rent increases because of the stipend. How many of the Legislature's employees would be interested in living in those thirty-three dorms.

SENATOR HUGHES said thirty-three people not renting from the private sector would have an impact. She understood some people have had an issue finding housing. She asked if that number of people seeking housing was close to thirty-three.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR GEARY said that the Legislature did not have thirty-three members seeking housing. Ms. Geary's office has received feedback in the past from members and staff that found housing but were not happy with it. Though most find housing, there are still issues to be addressed when it comes to housing.

SENATE PRESIDENT MICCICHE said Juneau has housing issues and he personally had to "couch surf" for five weeks. He believes there should be more discussion on the purpose of the building, options, policy, and then a decision. He is not ready to move forward on this project.

SENATOR BISHOP said competition is a good thing. If staff is having issues finding safe housing, there is a problem.

SENATOR STEDMAN said when looking at the housing issue, there are housing constraints all over Alaska. None of this is specific to Juneau, especially in spring when the tourism industry starts.

He said when a Special Session is called, there are complaints of no housing. Many suggest the idea of moving the Capital to combat the housing issue; this project is a solution to this problem. He said this is to ensure the Legislature can conduct business at the Capitol in Juneau. The issue of how this will impact the market he feels, is minimal.

Senator Stedman added that as Senator Bishop said, there are safety concerns. Downtown Juneau has many shady individuals who cause the delay of staffers getting to work on time. Security has had to perform security checks on staffers in the past. The Legislature must ensure that we are able to conduct business in the event of a Special Session. He voiced his support for this action, the sooner the Legislature starts, the better.

VICE-CHAIR REINBOLD said she supports the action as she was one of the members who had issues finding affordable housing. She said the private sector has had sixty years to sort out housing and has not delivered.

REPRESENTATIVE EDGMON said this may easily be the way to go in terms of what the Legislature does with the building. Before deciding, he would like to understand the economic impact and the cost to the Legislature, and what will be happening with these units during two thirds of the year when the Legislature is not in Session. He supports the plan; however, he would like a full economic analysis to know if Council is making the right decision. He added for those on the Finance Committee, he would like the downstream costs to be attended to.

REPRESENTATIVE TUCK said the Legislature has experienced Special Sessions where housing could not be found. He used the 2016 Session as an example of there being no housing available. He reminded Council that it was the private sector that donated the Assembly Building to the Legislature. The building was once an apartment building, it is already equipped for the design that is proposed. With the building's infrastructure, to convert the building would be a low-cost endeavor.

He continued that the Legislature is not proposing to force workers into these units. They are only available to those interested in living one block from the Capitol. Regarding what is to be done with the units when the Legislature is not in Session, the Subcommittee concluded to have the units available for Legislators and not make them "Airbnbs" or rentals when they are not in use.

SENATOR BISHOP asked Mr. Jensen how long the contingency costs are good for.

MR. JENSEN said the budget includes all things allowable by the budget, construction, and design. The contingency amount is for permits, construction administration, and

contingency and would be good for the length of the construction.

SENATOR BISHOP stated he asked his previous question because retailers increase materials prices weekly. He asked Mr. Jensen how accurate the projected cost of the project is.

MR. JENSEN replied his company recognizes cost increases affect the price of the construction. The proposed budget is not a detailed cost estimate, but a project budget that is seen as a reasonable target.

REPRESENTATIVE TILTON said she understands that community leaders support this project. Her concern is that Council is being asked to approve five and a half million dollars for a projected budget. She said with supply chain issues, this is not the ideal time to start construction. Also, there have been no estimates as to what maintenance costs would be. Her understanding was that there would be a recommendation from the Subcommittee, not a proposal for moving forward.

8:25:25 AM

REPRESENTATIVE TILTON made a motion to table.

CHAIR HANNAN requested a roll call vote on the motion to table.

8:25:35 AM

A roll call vote was taken.

YEAS: Representatives Edgmon, Tilton; Senators Micciche, Hughes, Reinbold, Shower.

NAYS: Representatives Claman, Foster, Hannan, Stutes, Tuck; Senators Bishop, Stedman, Stevens.

The motion failed 6-8.

REPRESENTATIVE CLAMAN stated that one issue that has not been discussed enough is that lumber prices have increased by forty percent within the last year. By delaying this decision, Council will charge the public more money in terms of construction materials. He acknowledges the work of the Subcommittee, but believes it is in the public's best interest to decide now.

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SENATOR STEVENS agreed with deciding now and said the Legislature will have no trouble finding tenants for the thirty-three units. He reminded Council that the Baranof Hotel is closed, and the Legislature has had staff stay there for years. He understood that the Four Points Hotel was on the verge of closing, until the Juneau Community Foundation stepped in so there could be Legislative access to the hotel.

REPRESENTATIVE EDGMON said that if this were a State agency, the Legislature would ask for an economic analysis. He wished that Council could have more discussion and research into this project, and that he would be a dissenting vote on this motion.

SENATE PRESIDENT MICCICHE said there are two decision problems in the Legislature: the ones made too fast, and the ones made too slowly. In this case, it would be too fast. The Legislature does not know the cost of furnishing these apartments, the proposal has no mention of appliances or furnishings. He said also there is no policy with how these units will be distributed.

He stated he would likely support this plan if it was better flushed out. The proposed budget is inaccurate because the Legislature cannot determine what the cost of materials will be in the future. He said, at this time, he cannot support this project.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR GEARY added that an approval today allows the Legislature to complete the bid documents to send out to individual contractors. The contracts would still need to come back to Council for approval multiple times. What the committee is being asked today is to approve the plan to convert the Assembly Building into an apartment building.

She continued that we would work with the Finance Committees to approve receipt authority so the rent money would be used to pay for operating expenses. The proposed remodel is to make it more efficient, so it will be an inexpensive building to run. Those exact figures are not in front of Council today but rent receipts should cover the expenses of the building.

SENATE PRESIDENT MICCICHE said what is put out demonstrates that Council does not have the issues he brought up addressed to make an informed decision. He will not decide until there is a business plan that shows

all those costs. Although Council is not deciding to fund the building, Council is deciding to move forward with a plan that is not well thought out.

SENATOR STEDMAN reiterated a yea vote today allows Council to put a more refined cost estimate together. It is clear the building was gifted to the Legislature and will not have a debt service to pay. It is his understanding the units will not be furnished. He said if a policy is created later to change that, so be it. The housing issue and the issues that Senator Stevens brought up are valid points. With inflation, costs are only getting higher. It is not to the Legislature's benefit to delay this decision.

SPEAKER STUTES moved to call the question.

[8:38:05 AM](#)

A roll call vote was taken on the motion.

YEAS: Representatives Claman, Foster, Hannan, Stutes, Tuck; Senators Bishop, Reinbold, Stedman, Stevens.

NAYS: Representatives Edgmon, Tilton; Senators Micciche, Hughes, Shower.

The motion passed 9-5.

c. FY21 Legislative Audit

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR GEARY said that by statute the Legislature has an annual independent audit of all expenditures. This year's audit was clean with no exceptions.

d. Review of Legislative Council COVID-19 Mitigation Policy

[8:40:47 AM](#)

VICE-CHAIR REINBOLD moved that Legislative Council adopt the COVID-19 Mitigation Policy as amended.

CHAIR HANNAN objected to the motion for purpose of discussion.

VICE-CHAIR REINBOLD moved to change "must" to "may" on page one of two in the first line of Cycle Testing/Screening in the COVID-19 Mitigation Policy and delete the second sentence in Cycle Testing/Screening.

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She said that currently the public and lobbyists are excluded from entering the building. She believes it is excessive that you must test every four days. She said it should be available to those who wish, but it should be optional to take a COVID-19 test.

SPEAKER STUTES stated a concern about addressing COVID-19 Mitigation Policy pertaining to the Legislative Lounge.

CHAIR HANNAN moved to call a vote on the motion to amend the Covid-19 Mitigation Policy.

Brief at-ease.

CHAIR HANNAN requested a roll call vote.

A roll call vote was taken.

YEAS: Representatives Claman, Foster, Hannan, Stutes; Senator Bishop.

NAYS: Representatives Edgmon, Tilton, Tuck; Senators Micciche, Hughes, Reinbold, Shower, Stedman, Stevens.

The motion failed 9-5.

SENATOR STEDMAN questioned the strictness of today's current COVID-19 policy. He would be surprised if everyone was following the policy. He voiced his support for the amendment to make testing optional but would like testing to stay available.

SENATE PRESIDENT MICCICHE offered an amendment to the amendment for Cycle Testing/Screening at the beginning of the first paragraph to read, "Legislative Council recommends Legislators, legislative staff, interns, and credentialed media participate in cycle testing..." and delete the second sentence of the Cycle Testing/Screening section.

Discussion to clarify the amendments of both Senators Reinbold and Micciche ensued.

Brief at-ease.

SENATE PRESIDENT MICCICHE withdrew his amendment to the amendment.

-DRAFT-

CHAIR HANNAN moved to vote on Senator Reinbold's amendment

8:55:05 AM

A roll call vote was taken.

YEAS: Representatives Edgmon, Foster, Stutes, Tilton, Tuck; Senators Bishop, Micciche, Hughes, Reinbold, Shower, Stedman, Stevens.

NAYS: Representatives Claman, Hannan.

The motion passed 12-2.

REPRESENTATIVE TILTON asked if Legislative offices can still request visitors to wear masks.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR GEARY said any office that has an employee who is immunocompromised or an employee who has health concerns is still permitted to ask visitors to wear a mask, and clarified that the Legislative Council Chair could request mask use in individually-occurring circumstances.

VICE-CHAIR REINBOLD asked for a clarification on the wording of page two section IV of the COVID Mitigation Policy.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR GEARY said if someone tests positive, they are required to isolate as directed by health authorities. Currently the CDC's guidance says that, if you are a close contact and do not meet the certain requirements of having COVID within ninety days and being boosted, the current protocol is that those people must quarantine for five days. The "test to stay protocol" allows daily testing for close contacts so they do not have to miss work.

VICE-CHAIR REINBOLD asked if this is saying unvaccinated people must isolate for five days and natural immunity is not recognized even though it is superior.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR GEARY said no, if an individual is sick and tests positive, that is the only time this section would go into effect. She recited Section IV of the proposed COVID Mitigation Policy.

SENATE PRESIDENT MICCICHE said his understanding of this policy is that committee chairs will still have the

-DRAFT-

option of making COVID policies inside of their committee rooms. He asked if that was a correct assumption.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR GEARY responded yes.

SENATE PRESIDENT MICCICHE moved to call the question.

CHAIR HANNAN restated that the question before Council is to adopt the updated Legislative Council COVID-19 Mitigation Policy as amended by Senator Reinbold.

There was discussion regarding masks now being optional within the Capitol.

REPRESENTATIVE TUCK asked, regarding section III of the COVID-19 Mitigation Policy, if authority goes to the Council Chair or Rules Chair.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR GEARY said the reason the Legislative Council Chair is listed because it is a Council policy. Historically, Council Chair has been responsible for exceptions to the policy. She said this does not take any authority away from any committee chair; those decisions by those individuals can still be made. Legislative Council Chair could not agree, but that is not the intent of this policy.

VICE-CHAIR REINBOLD asked if there is equal application between unvaccinated and vaccinated in the policy and that natural immunity is recognized.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR GEARY said those factors are covered in the test to stay protocol. It treats everyone the same unless someone tests positive.

REPRESENTATIVE TILTON asked if the Council Chair determines a special situation, like the Lounge requiring masks, and will it be made clear to the Legislature when those decisions are made.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR GEARY said signage will be placed and a communication made to let all offices know what spaces require masks.

CHAIR HANNAN requested a roll call vote on the modified February 23 COVID-19 Mitigation Policy.

9:06:50 AM

A roll call vote was taken.

-DRAFT-

YEAS: Representatives Claman, Edgmon, Foster, Hannan, Stutes, Tilton, Tuck; Senators Bishop, Micciche, Hughes, Reinbold, Shower, Stedman, Stevens.

NAYS: None.

The motion passed 14-0.

VI. ADJOURN

[9:07:40 AM](#)

Chair Hannan said with nothing further to come before Council, the meeting is adjourned.