

**ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE
LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL**

**APRIL 18, 2023
5:30 PM**

MEMBERS PRESENT

Senator Elvi Gray-Jackson, Chair
Representative Kevin McCabe, Vice Chair
Senator Click Bishop
Senator Matt Claman
Senator Lyman Hoffman
Senator Jesse Kiehl
Senator Donny Olson
Senator Gary Stevens
Representative Bryce Edgmon
Representative Sara Hannan
Representative Craig Johnson
Representative George Rauscher
Representative Dan Saddler
Representative Cathy Tilton

MEMBERS ABSENT

Senator Bert Stedman (alternate)

AGENDA

APPROVAL OF AGENDA
APPROVAL OF MINUTES
RATIFICATION OF CHARITY EVENTS
CONTRACT APPROVALS
COMMITTEE BUSINESS-EXECUTIVE SESSION
COMMITTEE BUSINESS

SPEAKER REGISTER

Jessica Geary, Executive Director, Legislative Affairs
Agency (LAA)
JC Kestel, Procurement Officer, LAA
Tim Banaszak, Chief Information Officer, Integrated
Technology Services, LAA

I. CALL TO ORDER

5:31:58 PM

CHAIR GRAY-JACKSON called the Legislative Council meeting to order at 5:31 pm on April 18, 2023. Present at the call were: Senators Bishop, Claman, Gray-Jackson, Kiehl, Olson, Stevens; Representatives Edgmon, Hannan, Johnson, Rauscher, Saddler, McCabe, Tilton.

Twelve members present.

Speaker Tilton joined the meeting at 5:35 PM, Senator Hoffman joined the meeting at 6:17 PM.

II. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

5:33:05 PM

VICE CHAIR MCCABE moved that Legislative Council approve the agenda as presented.

The agenda was approved without objection.

III. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

5:33:25 PM

VICE CHAIR MCCABE moved that Legislative Council approve the minutes dated: January 16, 2023, and February 21, 2023, as presented.

The minutes were approved without objection.

IV. RATIFICATION OF CHARITY EVENTS

5:33:49 PM

VICE-CHAIR MCCABE moved and asked unanimous consent that Legislative Council ratify the Chair's sanctioning of the following charitable events per AS 24.60.080(a)(2)(B): Sham Jam, April 8, 2023; Legislative Skits, April 29-30, 2023; Kenai River Junior Classic, August 9, 2023; Ted Stevens Kenai River Classic, August 23-25, 2023; and Kenai River Women's Classic, September 14-16, 2023.

CHAIR GRAY-JACKSON objected for the purpose of discussion. She stated that she previously sanctioned the listed events and verified the 501(c)(3) status of the charities. There was no discussion, the objection was removed, and the charitable events were ratified.

V. CONTRACT APPROVALS

A. Ketchikan Lease Renewal

[5:35:11 PM](#)

VICE CHAIR MCCABE moved that Legislative Council approve continuation of the lease extension for Ketchikan office space through February 28, 2027, in the amount of \$50,645.88 for fiscal year 2024.

CHAIR GRAY-JACKSON objected for the purpose of discussion and asked Mr. Kestel to speak to this item.

JC KESTEL, Procurement Officer (LAA), said the current Ketchikan lease was under the \$50,000 threshold at the time the lease extension was exercised by a previous Legislative Council Chair. Due to the recent increase in the Consumer Price Index for All Urban Consumers (CPI-U), this lease will exceed the \$50,000 threshold for the upcoming fiscal year (2024); therefore, Legislative Council's approval is required to continue this lease extension.

There was no discussion and Chair Gray-Jackson removed her objection.

[5:36:57 PM](#)

A roll call vote was taken.

YEAS: Senators Bishop, Claman, Gray-Jackson, Kiehl, Olson, Stevens; Representatives Edgmon, Hannan, Johnson, McCabe, Rauscher, Saddler, Tilton

NAYS: None

The motion passed 13-0.

B. Fairbanks Lease Renewal

[5:37:48 PM](#)

VICE-CHAIR MCCABE moved that Legislative Council approve Renewal Number 3 of the lease for Fairbanks office space in the amount of \$216,240.96.

CHAIR GRAY-JACKSON objected for the purpose of discussion and asked Procurement Officer JC Kestel to speak to this item.

MR. KESTEL stated that this item is for the third renewal of the Fairbanks office space. He said the current lease renewal expires July 31, 2023, and if Council approves the request today, there will be two remaining one-year renewals of this lease. The third renewal is for the period of August 1, 2023, through July 31, 2024, and since it exceeds the \$50,000 limit, it requires Legislative Council approval.

There was no discussion and Chair Gray-Jackson removed her objection.

[5:38:51 PM](#)

A roll call vote was taken.

YEAS: Senators Bishop, Claman, Gray-Jackson, Kiehl, Olson, Stevens; Representatives Edgmon, Hannan, Johnson, McCabe, Rauscher, Saddler, Tilton

NAYS: None

The motion passed 13-0.

C. Mat-Su Lease Extension Renewal

[5:39:34 PM](#)

VICE-CHAIR MCCABE moved that Legislative Council approve Renewal Number 2 of the lease for the Mat-Su office space in the amount of \$190,681.56.

CHAIR GRAY-JACKSON objected for the purpose of discussion and asked Procurement Officer JC Kestel to speak on this item.

MR. KESTEL stated that this request is for the second renewal of the Mat-Su office space lease. The renewal period, if approved, would cover August 1, 2023, through July 31, 2024, leaving three optional renewals remaining. Since it exceeds the \$50,000 limit in one fiscal year, the renewal requires Legislative Council approval.

There was no discussion and Chair Gray-Jackson removed her objection.

[5:40:41 PM](#)

A roll call vote was taken.

YEAS: Senators Bishop, Claman, Gray-Jackson, Kiehl, Olson, Stevens; Representatives Edgmon, Hannan, Johnson, McCabe, Rauscher, Saddler, Tilton

NAYS: None

The motion passed 13-0.

D. FY24 Microsoft Enterprise Software Renewal Agreement

[5:41:26 PM](#)

VICE-CHAIR MCCABE moved that Legislative Council authorize the annual Microsoft FY24 licensing payment to Software House International (SHI) for \$278,056.

CHAIR GRAY-JACKSON objected for the purpose of discussion and asked Mr. Banaszak to speak to this item.

TIM BANASZAK, Chief Information Officer (LAA), stated that this SHI Microsoft renewal is the third and final renewal available under the current State of Alaska three-year contract; Council previously approved the first two renewals. The primary purpose of the contract is to provide Microsoft products that affect essential functions of the Legislature including Windows 10, Windows server operating systems, cybersecurity software, and the Office software suite. It also provides software for critical infrastructure and systems such as Windows servers and databases, most notably BASIS; network storage drives; web servers; video conferencing systems like Microsoft Teams; and crucial cybersecurity tools. He recommended renewal of the agreement which offers reduced volume pricing and enhanced technical support, as well as training for both technical staff and users.

Mr. Banaszak noted the cost of this renewal is the Legislature's portion of the State of Alaska contract which was competitively procured. In response to a question by Representative Johnson, Mr. Banaszak responded that the software licensing and renewals allow for updating the software to the latest versions available, including Windows 11. While the memo does not mention the upgrade, the license does.

There was no further discussion and Chair Gray-Jackson removed her objection.

[5:47:57 PM](#)

A roll call vote was taken.

YEAS: Senators Bishop, Claman, Gray-Jackson, Kiehl, Olson, Stevens; Representatives Edgmon, Hannan, Johnson, McCabe, Rauscher, Saddler, Tilton

NAYS: None

The motion passed 13-0.

VI. COMMITTEE BUSINESS - EXECUTIVE SESSION

[5:48:49 PM](#)

VICE CHAIR MCCABE 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 and 22(b)(3), discussion of a matter that may, by law, be required to be confidential. The following individuals may remain in the room or online during Executive Session: Jessica Geary, Megan Wallace, Emily Nauman, Santé Lesh, Molly Kiesel, JC Kestel, Tim Banaszak, Skiff Lobaugh, and any legislators not on Legislative Council, and any staff of Legislative Council members.

[5:50:02 PM](#)

A roll call vote was taken.

YEAS: Senators Bishop, Claman, Gray-Jackson, Kiehl, Olson, Stevens; Representatives Edgmon, Hannan, Johnson, McCabe, Rauscher, Saddler, Tilton

NAYS: None

The motion passed 13-0.

[5:50:37 PM](#)

Council went into Executive Session.

[6:15:36 PM](#)

Council came out of Executive Session.

A roll call was taken to establish a quorum.

YEAS: Senators Bishop, Claman, Gray-Jackson, Kiehl, Olson, Stevens; Representatives Edgmon, Hannan, Johnson, McCabe, Rauscher, Saddler, Tilton

Thirteen members present.

A. Lease Extension Renewal

[6:16:24 PM](#)

VICE CHAIR MCCABE moved that Legislative Council approve Renewal Number 1 of the lease for the Office of Victims' Rights office space in the amount of \$50,087.16 through June 30, 2024.

CHAIR GRAY-JACKSON objected for the purpose of discussion and asked Mr. Kestel to speak to this item.

MR. KESTEL stated that this request is for the first renewal of the lease extension for the Office of Victims' Rights. Since the renewal exceeds the \$50,000 limit in one fiscal year, it requires Legislative Council approval. If approved, the lease extension renewal would be granted through June 30, 2024.

There was no discussion and Chair Gray-Jackson removed her objection.

[6:17:35 PM](#)

A roll call vote was taken.

YEAS: Senators Bishop, Claman, Gray-Jackson, Kiehl, Olson, Stevens; Representatives Edgmon, Hannan, Johnson, McCabe, Rauscher, Saddler, Tilton

NAYS: None

The motion passed 13-0.

VII. COMMITTEE BUSINESS

A. 40-Hour Workweek

CHAIR GRAY-JACKSON asked Ms. Geary to speak on the change to the 40-hour workweek.

Prior to Ms. Geary's testimony, Senate President Stevens requested that Council pause to ensure Senator Hoffman was on teleconference as he had expressed an interest in participating for this item.

[6:18:37 PM](#)

Council took a brief at-ease.

[6:18:47 PM](#)

-DRAFT-

Council returned from at-ease. Senator Hoffman was confirmed to be on teleconference.

JESSICA GEARY, Executive Director (LAA), stated the reason LAA started looking into moving to a 40-hour workweek was because compensatory time over the last couple of years was frequently exceeding the 150-hour maximum that non-partisan staff can accumulate. In many cases, this resulted in difficulty for staff to use both their comp time and their mandatory leave. Paying staff for an additional 2.5 hours per week which they are already working would help improve morale, retention, and burnout that employees are currently experiencing. She said she has additional information prepared and is pleased to answer questions.

REPRESENTATIVE SADDLER asked which LAA sections were experiencing the most burnout.

MS. GEARY responded that Legal Services, IT, Maintenance, and sometimes Supply experience the most burnout.

REPRESENTATIVE SADDLER followed up to confirm that Legal Services, IT, and Maintenance were some of LAA's largest sections.

MS. GEARY confirmed that was correct.

[6:21:22 PM](#)

CHAIR GRAY-JACKSON called a brief at-ease.

[6:21:46 PM](#)

Council returned from at-ease.

[6:22:16 PM](#)

VICE CHAIR MCCABE moved that Legislative Council adopt the Standard Workweek Policy as presented.

CHAIR GRAY-JACKSON objected for the purpose of discussion.

REPRESENTATIVE RAUSCHER stated his support for the 40-hour workweek.

[6:23:49 PM](#)

A roll call vote was taken.

YEAS: Senators Bishop, Claman, Hoffman, Gray-Jackson, Kiehl, Olson, Stevens; Representatives Edgmon, Hannan, Johnson, McCabe, Rauscher, Saddler, Tilton

NAYS: None

The motion passed 14-0.

B. FY24 Hardware Refresh

[6:24:47 PM](#)

VICE CHAIR MCCABE moved that Legislative Council approve the Fiscal Year 2024 Computer Hardware Refresh in the amount of \$176,642 out of existing capital funds.

CHAIR GRAY-JACKSON objected for the purpose of discussion and asked Chief Information Officer Tim Banaszak to speak on the issue.

MR. BANASZAK stated that the motion for \$176,642 addresses deferred maintenance for Council's consideration to include: 50 laptop workstations; 23 laser printers; 5 tiny PC workstations; 165 laptop docking stations; and 15 iPads. The hardware refresh follows the IT Subcommittee guidelines and is based on a five-year computer refresh cycle, age of equipment, upkeep costs, performance, and obsolescence. The recommendations are consistent with the Three-Year Technology Plan; standardize a single, color laser printer for each office, reducing toner replacement costs and support resources; transition hardware to laptop computers that support working from any location; and are cost efficient, leveraging government contract volume discount pricing. He said he was happy to answer any questions.

[6:28:02 PM](#)

A roll call vote was taken.

YEAS: Senators Bishop, Claman, Gray-Jackson, Kiehl, Olson, Stevens; Representatives Edgmon, Hannan, Johnson, McCabe, Rauscher, Saddler, Tilton

NAYS: None

The motion passed 13-0.

C. Amendment to COVID-19 Mitigation Policy

[6:28:51 PM](#)

VICE CHAIR MCCABE moved that Legislative Council approve the amendment to the COVID-19 Mitigation Policy as presented.

CHAIR GRAY-JACKSON objected for the purpose of discussion and asked Ms. Geary to speak to this item.

MS. GEARY stated members have a copy of the amended policy and a memo outlining the proposed changes. The simple changes eliminate provisions that the Legislature is no longer following such as social distancing requirements, testing, and screening. She noted the amended policy retains the ability for individuals to require masking in their own offices. In response to a question by Senator Olson, Ms. Geary said positive cases are no longer officially being tracked and the number of those who self-reported were insignificant.

[6:30:30 PM](#)

A roll call vote was taken.

YEAS: Senators Bishop, Claman, Gray-Jackson, Kiehl, Olson, Stevens; Representatives Edgmon, Hannan, Johnson, McCabe, Rauscher, Saddler, Tilton

NAYS: None

The motion passed 13-0.

VIII. OTHER COMMITTEE BUSINESS

A. Announcement of Subcommittees

CHAIR GRAY-JACKSON stated that in the first meeting of Legislative Council on February 21, 2023, she requested volunteers for three subcommittees, with follow-up requests during subsequent discussions. She extended her gratitude to the following legislators and staff who volunteered to work on these issues:

Assembly Building Subcommittee

CHAIR Senator Kiehl
Senator Bishop
Senator Stedman
Senator Gray-Jackson
Representative McCabe
Representative Hannan
Jessica Geary, Executive Director, LAA
Serge Lesh, Facilities Manager, LAA

Security Subcommittee

CHAIR Representative Cronk
Representative Tilton
Representative C. Johnson

Senator Stevens
Senator Claman
Senator Shower
Jessica Geary, Executive Director, LAA
Rayme Vinson, Chief of Security, LAA

IT Subcommittee

CHAIR Tim Banaszak, Chief Information Officer, LAA
Tim Lamkin, Staff to Senator Stevens
Steve St.Clair, Staff to Speaker Tilton
Lizzie Kubitz, Staff to Senator Claman
Aurora Hauke, Staff to Senator Kiehl
Forrest Musselman, House Majority Press Office
Alliana Salanguit, Staff to Senator Dunbar
Naresh Shrestha, Staff to Senator Shower
Tim Clark, Staff to Representative Hannan
Ed King, Staff to Representative McKay
Crys Jones, Chief Clerk
Liz Clark, Senator Secretary
Tim Powers, Information and Teleconference Manager, LAA
Brian Heimbigner, Media Services, LAA
Shay Wilson (IT Advisory), LAA
Drew Gruening (IT Advisory), LAA
Frank Wilson (IT Advisory), LAA

Chair Gray-Jackson welcomed two additional members from the House to serve on the Assembly Building Policy Subcommittee, but it is not required. She again thanked individuals for volunteering to serve on these subcommittees.

B. 2022 Agency Report

CHAIR GRAY-JACKSON asked Ms. Geary to speak on the 2022 Agency Report distributed to legislators last year and again in meeting packets today. She said she knew that Agency staff worked hard, but she was truly amazed at all the work done in support of the Legislature. She truly appreciated that work and looked forward to Ms. Geary's comments and answers to any questions from members.

MS. GEARY said this Agency Report was drafted after going through COVID and demonstrates the Agency's work for members and staff. These reports will be bi-annual and provided to members at the end of each Legislature. Members can review the report and ask questions about any of the work being done. She said an important thing to note is this report shows how proud Agency staff are to work in

support of the Legislature. She said she is very proud to work here and knows her staff are as well.

Ms. Geary, in response to a question by Senate President Stevens, said the operations of the Legislative Lounge are under the purview of the Senate Rules Chair, not LAA.

SENATOR BISHOP thanked Ms. Geary and her staff. These last several years have not been easy. He said he and all legislators owe Ms. Geary and, under her leadership, all LAA employees, a debt of gratitude for what they went through to make this building work; so, thank you.

REPRESENTATIVE HANNAN echoed Senator Bishop's comments. She said Council chairs gain an understanding of all the work that happens behind the scenes, but most offices are unaware because of the exemplary job of those doing the work. The Agency's job is to make legislators' jobs possible, and they do so with very little fanfare, and she thanked them for it.

C. Preview of Upcoming Items

CHAIR GRAY-JACKSON asked Ms. Geary to provide a brief summary of items that are anticipated to come before Council this year.

MS. GEARY said she anticipates bringing to Council for consideration within the next year, and possibly the following year depending on solicitation length, the following items: (1) the Terry Miller Legislative Office Building, where most LAA offices are located, needs a new HVAC system. The system is antiquated, parts are no longer available nor is there the knowledge and expertise to repair it, so LAA is working on issuing a procurement for a new system; (2) service contracts in Anchorage - a janitorial contract renewal which expires in August, a snow removal contract which expires in October, and a security contract renewal which expires in December; (3) the Kodiak lease, which expires in October; and (4) depending on subcommittee recommendations there may be security items and some Assembly Building policy related items. Ms. Geary ended her preview by saying that of course there may be unexpected items that arise to be brought before Council.

There was no discussion.

IX. ADJOURN

-DRAFT-

CHAIR GRAY-JACKSON thanked previous Council Chair Representative Hannan for her leadership. She thanked Ms. Geary and Agency staff for their hard work, especially during COVID. She thanked her staff in helping her as Council Chair which requires a great deal of time and effort. Lastly, she thanked Vice Chair McCabe for the advance work required to allow these meetings to be successful.

With no further business before the committee, the meeting was adjourned at 6:42 PM.

[6:42:17 PM](#)