

**ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE
LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL**

**FEBRUARY 28, 2024
5:30 PM**

MEMBERS PRESENT

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

MEMBERS ABSENT

Senator Lyman Hoffman

OTHER MEMBERS PRESENT

Representative David Eastman
Representative Andy Josephson
Representative CJ McCormick
Representative Louise Stutes

AGENDA

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

SPEAKER REGISTER

Jessica Geary, Executive Director, Legislative Affairs Agency
(LAA)
Shay Wilson, Chief Information Officer, LAA
Mindy Kissner, Finance Manager, LAA
John Wright, Print Shop Manager, LAA

I. CALL TO ORDER

[5:31:16 PM](#)

CHAIR GRAY-JACKSON called the Legislative Council meeting to order at 5:31 pm on February 28, 2024, in Room 532 (Senate Finance) of the State Capitol. Present at the call were: Senators Bishop, Gray-Jackson, Kiehl, Olson, Stedman, Stevens; Representatives Edgmon, Hannan, Johnson, McCabe, Rauscher, Saddler, Tilton.

Thirteen members present.

Senator Claman joined the meeting at 5:42 pm.

II. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

[5:32:15 PM](#)

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

The motion passed without objection.

III. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

[5:32:34 PM](#)

VICE CHAIR MCCABE moved that Legislative Council approve the minutes for December 14, 2023.

The motion passed without objection.

IV. RATIFICATION OF CHARITY EVENTS

[5:32:53 PM](#)

VICE CHAIR MCCABE moved that Legislative Council ratify the Chair's sanctioning of the following charitable events per AS 24.60.080 (a) (2) (B):

- a. Alaska SeaLife Center Soiree - February 3, 2024
- b. Trend Alaska Fashion Show - February 17, 2024
- c. Juneau Animal Rescue Extravaganza - February 17, 2024
- d. Sham Jam - March 23, 2024
- e. Kenai River Junior Classic - August 7, 2024
- f. Ted Stevens Kenai River Classic - August 21, 22, 23, 2024
- g. Kenai River Women's Classic - September 12, 13, 14, 2024

CHAIR GRAY-JACKSON objected for the purpose of discussion and confirmed the previously sanctioned list of events are 501(c) (3) charities. The Chair removed her objection and asked for additional comments or discussion for the ratification of the events.

There was no discussion and the motion passed without objection.

V. CONTRACT APPROVALS

a. Cybersecurity Licensing, Maintenance, and Technical Support Renewal

[5:34:15 PM](#)

VICE CHAIR MCCABE moved that Legislative Council authorize \$99,894 to renew annual cybersecurity licensing, maintenance, and support.

CHAIR GRAY-JACKSON objected for the purpose of discussion and asked Shay Wilson, Chief Information Officer, to speak to the item and answer any questions.

SHAY WILSON, Chief Information Officer, Legislative Affairs Agency (LAA), stated before Council members is a request for consideration to approve the renewal of the annual cybersecurity license, maintenance, and technical support services which protect the legislative network and information technology infrastructure. Mr. Wilson said the licenses cover four pieces of hardware installed in two data centers located in Juneau and Anchorage. The hardware devices provide security to the legislature by acting as a network firewall, provide remote access through VPN, and perform traffic inspections. Without these protections the legislature would be vulnerable to the dangers that exist on the internet. He said two quotes were received for these licenses, the lower of which was \$99,894 from Structured Communications Systems. Mr. Wilson recommended Legislative Council authorize the use of existing operating funds to renew these licenses.

REPRESENTATIVE SADDLER asked if any assurance could be given that renewing these licenses would provide the protection the legislature needs regarding cybersecurity.

MR. WILSON stated there are no assurances when dealing with cybersecurity. Best practices are to measure risk and reward, then take the best action with the resources available at the time. He assured the committee Structure Communications Systems products are the best of class for these services while acknowledging that he cannot offer complete assurance that this expenditure will make the legislature's networks safe.

CHAIR GRAY-JACKSON, noting there were no further questions, removed her objection and called for the vote.

[5:36:47 PM](#)

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

NAYS: None

The motion passed 13-0.

VI. EXECUTIVE SESSION

- a. Legal Update (LAW/Janus)**
- b. Security Update**
- c. Salary Schedule Discussion**

CHAIR GRAY-JACKSON said Council would go into Executive Session to receive a legal update and a security update, and to have a discussion on the salary schedule.

[5:37:30 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, Noah Klein, Santé Lesh, Rayme Vinson, Stacie Bentley, any legislators not on Legislative Council, and any staff of Legislative Council members.

[5:38:17 PM](#)

A roll call vote was taken.

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

NAYS: None

The motion passed 13-0.

[5:39:01 PM](#)

Council went into Executive Session.

[6:14:42 PM](#)

Council came out of Executive Session.

A roll call vote was taken to establish a quorum.

Present at the call were Senators Bishop, Claman, Gray-Jackson, Kiehl, Olson, Stedman, Stevens; Representatives Edgmon, Hannan, Johnson, McCabe, Rauscher, Saddler, Tilton.

Fourteen members present.

c. Salary Schedule Discussion

[6:15:25 PM](#)

VICE CHAIR MCCABE moved that Legislative Council approve bill draft version 33-LS1440\B and request the Senate Rules committee to introduce it.

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

JESSICA GEARY, Executive Director, LAA, said the motion would approve introduction of a bill to be carried by Senate Rules by request of Legislative Council that would correct an issue that came to light in 2023. In 2022, language was inserted into a bill (HB 226) with the intent that exempt, partially exempt, and classified employees would receive cost of living adjustments (COLA) at the same time as the Supervisory Union through their negotiated contracts; and that language was perceived as inadequate to accomplish what was intended. The bill before Council will correct the language and add parity to the other employees of the State who are not covered by unions.

REPRESENTATIVE SADDLER asked for an estimation of what it may cost and the number of personnel who may be affected by the bill.

MS. GEARY stated for fiscal year 2024 the Supervisory Union negotiated for a one percent cost of living adjustment, the other employees did not receive that because of inadequate language; for the legislative branch that was about a \$500,000 increase. Approximately 2,000 employees statewide are affected by the same salary schedule. The Supervisory Union is currently in contract negotiations; we do not know what amount they are negotiating for and we may not know until around the end of May. In response to a follow-up question by Representative Saddler, Ms. Geary said 517 legislative employees would be eligible for the one percent COLA.

There were no additional questions; the Chair removed her objection and asked for a roll call vote.

[6:18:22 PM](#)

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

NAYS: None

The motion passed 14-0.

VII. COMMITTEE BUSINESS

a. FY23 Legislature Independent Audit

CHAIR GRAY-JACKON stated this was not an action item and is informative only.

MINDY KISSNER, Finance Manager, LAA, said before Council is a copy of the FY23 audit conducted by external auditors Elgee Rehfeld. By statute the legislature undergoes an annual independent audit of its internal controls and financial statements. The outcome of the FY23 audit was a clean audit with no exceptions.

MS. GEARY thanked Ms. Kissner and noted it is wonderful the legislature received a clean audit, which is a big accomplishment.

CHAIR GRAY-JACKSON asked for a motion before calling for an at-ease.

[6:20:35 PM](#)

There was a brief at-ease after some confusion about whether a motion was required. Determining there was no need for a motion, Chair Gray-Jackson shared she was pleased the Legislature received a clean audit.

b. FY25 Legislative Council Budget

VICE CHAIR MCCABE moved that Legislative Council, per AS 24.20.130, approve the FY25 Legislative Council proposed budget and transmit it to the House and Senate Finance Committees for their review and action.

CHAIR GRAY-JACKSON objected for the purpose of discussion and stated after discussion, if the motion is approved, the Legislative Council budget would be advanced to the respective legislature budget subcommittees. Legislative Council members Representatives Tilton and Johnson serve on the House subcommittee, and Senators Stedman, Hoffman, Olson, and Stevens serve on the Senate subcommittee.

MS. GEARY stated before members is the Legislative Council FY25 proposed budget and sectional narrative that details each appropriation and allocation in the budget. She noted that in preparing this request, she met with the Presiding Officers, the Rules Chairs, the House and Senate Finance co-chair staff, as well as the Council chair. Ms. Geary said Legislative Council is responsible for authorizing the transmittal of the budget request to the finance committees for action; by voting yes, members agree to pass the budget to the finance

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committees for any additional work or changes the committees may make.

Ms. Geary highlighted significant items in the budget:

Overtime hours worked by LAA staff, which have been a big topic of discussion for the last few years, are still high though moving in the right direction, especially with implementation of the 40-hour work week. Recruitment and retention remain challenging in specific areas, mainly seasonal and lower range positions.

The Administrative Services portion of the budget includes a \$235,000 increment funded by general fund program receipts, which is rent received from the Assembly Building Apartments (ABA). The income will pay for the operating expenses of the ABA. There is also a FY24 supplemental.

There is a transfer out of Administrative Services into the newly created Division of Technology and Information, which is a transfer of positions and budget authority.

The Select Committee on Legislative Ethics allocation has a \$22,700 increment to fund transitioning the part-time legislative secretary position to full-time.

The Legislative State Facilities Rent allocation has a \$90,800 increment to cover increases to statewide lease costs, primarily related to increases in space rented from the Department of Transportation and Public Facilities, which are interagency lease costs.

There is an increment of \$100,000 to the Security Services allocation which allows moving a part-time guard position to full-time and one armed guard position to become a commissioned officer position to help with overall security.

Lastly, within Session Expenses there is a \$581,000 increment which was placed in the budget last year to ensure adequate funding for this allocation, especially in the event of a special session. It was vetoed by the Governor and has been placed back into the Legislative Council budget.

CHAIR GRAY-JACKSON, seeing no questions, removed her objection and asked for a roll call vote.

[6:25:33 PM](#)

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

NAYS: None

The motion passed 14-0.

c. Print Shop Policy Amendment

CHAIR GRAY-JACKSON stated the Print Shop Policy was first discussed at the August 28, 2023, Legislative Council meeting. Since then, draft language was crafted by Representative C. Johnson, his staff Tom Wright, LAA, and Chair Gray-Jackson. Print Shop Manager John Wright printed and distributed samples to Council members. Based on feedback from members and in consultation with Representative Johnson, before members is revised policy language that changed the proposed required statement from "Paid for by the Legislative Print Shop" to the revised "**Printing** paid for by the Legislative Print Shop".

[6:27:07 PM](#)

VICE CHAIR MCCABE moved Legislative Council approve the Print Shop Policy as amended. He noted this version of the policy says 'REVISED' in the upper right-hand corner of the document.

CHAIR GRAY-JACKSON objected for the purpose of discussion and asked Representative Johnson to share his comments and answer any questions.

REPRESENTATIVE JOHNSON stated the purpose of the policy revision is to clearly identify to the public who paid for the printing of items produced by the Legislative Print Shop, much like members do with campaign funds. He said he thinks the public has a right to know that documents produced by the Print Shop are paid for with State funds. He said the amendment [adding the word "Printing" to the proposed language] clarifies it so that, for example, should a pin be attached to an item produced by the Print Shop, it will be clear that only the printing was paid for by the Print Shop. He continued that, in terms of transparency, it's when a legislator sends out a mailing, where it was produced and who paid for it be clearly identified.

SENATOR CLAMAN asked if there have been complaints from the public about print materials. He said he has often used the Print Shop and had not heard complaints from his constituency about the current policy; and wondered who else the public would think would be paying for it.

REPRESENTATIVE JOHNSON stated he had heard of a few complaints in the past where items were mailed that were paid for by the Print Shop that were mis-mailed and so it wasn't clear where it came from. He continued that just because there haven't been complaints doesn't mean we can't fix things before they happen. He said he thinks this is a transparency issue, the public has a right to know where the money comes from that

pays for the printing, that it is not campaign money and it is not personal money, it is paid for by the Print Shop.

SENATOR BISHOP asked for clarification on the amendment to the policy, specifically if a precise font size will be required.

REPRESENTATIVE JOHNSON responded that the goal was to have a font size that is "clearly legible", which is similar to what is required by the Alaska Public Offices Commission (APOC). He said the Print Shop chose the font size for the samples distributed to members. [Proposed policy language stipulates "easily discernable".] Representative Johnson said he would anticipate the size of font used in the samples would be the required size. In response to a follow-up question by Senator Bishop, he said that he believed the font size printed on the samples would be acceptable under the revised policy. Representative Johnson restated that adding the word "Printing" to the disclaimer is meant to clarify for the public that the cost of printing was paid for by the Legislative Print Shop.

CHAIR GRAY-JACKSON clarified by changing the language from "paid for" to "*printing* paid for" the public will know the postcard or newsletter is printed by the Print Shop and that printing is paid for with State funds, but the postage is paid for by the legislator's office account.

PRESENTATIVE SADDLER said he formerly worked in a print shop and the font size on the samples provided by the Print Shop seemed to be about six point type. He said he might offer an amendment to the policy change motion to say that the disclaimer must be easily discernable and at least six point font as the measurement of size.

CHAIR GRAY-JACKSON asked Representative Saddler if he would like to make a motion.

REPRESENTATIVE SADDLER moved to amend the original motion that the disclaimer include a minimum font size of six points.

MS. GEARY stated the intent is that the legislative office be responsible for placing the disclaimer on their document submittal; it will not be the Print Shop's responsibility. She said that does not affect Representative Saddler's request about font size and asked if John Wright, Print Shop Manager, would address the topic of font size.

JOHN WRIGHT, Print Shop Manager, LAA, clarified that the font size used in the samples was eight point though he did not remember the font type. The software used in the Print Shop has about six different fonts to choose from that allows staff to easily stamp the proposed disclaimer on documents. He said

as Ms. Geary stated, it would be best if offices designing the document incorporated that statement into their design.

REPRESENTATIVE SADDLER changed his amendment to the motion stating the indicator must be easily discernable and at least eight points in size.

6:33:58 PM

Council took an at-ease.

6:34:17 PM

Council returned from at-ease.

6:34:20 PM

REPRESENTATIVE SADDLER, at the Chair's request, restated his amendment to the motion to amend the proposed Print Shop guideline change to indicate the size of the type must be "...easily discernable and no less than eight-point size."

DISCUSSION FOLLOWED regarding the pros and cons of required font size; whether the fund source should be the Alaska Legislature rather than the Print Shop and the potential perceptions and implications of each option; and clarifying the intent of the policy language and whether members were misusing the Print Shop resource.

SENATOR CLAMAN called a point of order that the motion before members is whether to approve Representative Saddler's motion to add "eight points" to the disclaimer and the discussion being had is a separate discussion which may be the subject of an additional motion about what the disclaimer should say. Unless there are other comments on the eight-point topic, members should vote on the eight-point motion and then return to any other motions.

6:41:50 PM

A roll call vote was taken.

YEAS: Senators Bishop, Kiehl, Stedman; Representatives Edgmon, Johnson, Saddler, Tilton

NAYS: Senator Claman, Gray-Jackson, Olson, Stevens; Representatives Hannan, Rauscher, McCabe

The motion failed 7-7.

SENATOR CLAMAN said that it was his sense that although he thinks this is a valuable discussion, there seems to be a lot of diversity and people who may be unsettled about this topic; Senator Claman moved to table the matter.

[6:43:25 PM](#)

A roll call vote was taken.

YEAS: Senators Bishop, Claman, Kiehl, Olson, Stevens;
Representatives Edgmon, Hannan, Rauscher

NAYS: Senators Gray-Jackson, Stedman; Representatives Johnson,
Saddler, Tilton, McCabe

[6:44:26 PM](#)

Council took an at-ease.

[6:44:37 PM](#)

Council returned from at-ease.

The motion passed 8-6 and the item was tabled.

d. Subcommittee Updates

CHAIR GRAY-JACKSON stated subcommittee members were announced during the Legislative Council meeting on April 18, 2023. She thanked all who have served on these subcommittees and noted for the record a couple of updates to subcommittee membership which were previously shared via email with Council members:

- Shay Wilson, Chief Information Officer, will replace Tim Banaszak as chair of the IT subcommittee.
- Representative Cronk will continue to serve as a member of the Security subcommittee and Chair Gray-Jackson will replace him as Chair.

She noted these subcommittee announcements were informational only and not an action item.

e. Preview of Upcoming Items

CHAIR GRAY-JACKSON asked Ms. Geary to share with the committee a summary of items anticipated to come before Council in the coming year.

MS. GEARY stated in members' packets is a list of items expected to come before Legislative Council for approval over the next year, including contracts and RFPs for office space. She stated members who want further details or have any questions can reach out to her.

VIII. ADJOURNMENT

CHAIR GRAY-JACKSON asked members if there were any questions or comments prior to adjournment.

SENATOR OLSON said he may have a potential item for a future Council meeting regarding the application of AS 24.60.75-Compassionate gift exemption.

CHAIR GRAY-JACKSON added that Council staff had been consulting with Senator Olson on this item and will continue to work with his office.

6:48:23 PM

With no further business before the committee, the meeting was adjourned at 6:48 pm.