

**ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE  
HOUSE RULES STANDING COMMITTEE**

Anchorage, Alaska

June 23, 2009

1:30 p.m.

**MEMBERS PRESENT**

Representative John Coghill, Chair  
Representative Bob Herron, Vice Chair  
Representative Charisse Millett  
Representative Kurt Olson  
Representative Berta Gardner

**MEMBERS ABSENT**

Representative Mark Neuman  
Representative Beth Kerttula

**COMMITTEE CALENDAR**

AUTHORIZATION OF ASBESTOS ABATEMENT CONTRACT

- APPROVED

AUTHORIZATION TO GO TO BID FOR REMODELING SPEAKER'S OFFICE AND  
MAJORITY LEADER'S OFFICE

- APPROVED

**PREVIOUS COMMITTEE ACTION**

No previous action to record

**WITNESS REGISTER**

PAM VARNI, Executive Director  
Legislative Affairs Agency  
Juneau, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** During hearing, answered questions regarding using Session Funds for asbestos abatement and upgrade of the lighting and ceilings in the Speaker's and House Majority Leader's offices in the capitol building.

DON JOHNSTON, Building Manager  
Legislative Affairs Agency  
Juneau, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** During hearing, answered questions regarding using Session Funds for asbestos abatement and upgrade of the lighting and ceilings in the Speaker's and House Majority Leader's offices in the capitol building.

**ACTION NARRATIVE**

[1:30:07 PM](#)

**CHAIR JOHN COGHILL** called the House Rules Standing Committee meeting to order at 1:37 p.m. Representatives Coghill, Herron, Millett, Olson, and Gardner were present at the call to order.

Authorization of Asbestos Abatement Contract

[1:30:28 PM](#)

CHAIR COGHILL announced that the first order of business before the committee is consideration of the authorization of an asbestos abatement contract for a second floor wall in the capitol building. Asbestos was found in the wall adjoining the Speaker's office and the House Rules Chair's office. In order to move the aforementioned wall, an asbestos abatement strategy has to be in place. Chair Coghill explained that the House Rules Standing Committee is addressing these issues because the committee that would normally address such issues is unable to do so.

[1:31:39 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE HERRON moved that the House Rules Standing Committee approve the bid from Absolute Service, Inc., in the amount of \$33,800 for asbestos abatement on the second floor of the capitol from Session Expenses funding.

[1:31:56 PM](#)

PAM VARNI, Executive Director, Legislative Affairs Agency, in response to Chair Coghill, explained that the funding being requested is from the component that the House and Senate Rules Standing Committees control with the exception of travel, which is covered by the presiding officers. The main collocation code, 31924301, isn't the component utilized for funding staff or small furniture purchases. She estimated that this fiscal year over \$600,000 will lapse from the main component of the legislature's budget. Therefore, there's plenty of funding to approve the contract for the asbestos abatement. She noted that

procurement procedures require committee authorization of funds when the amount is in excess of \$25,000.

[1:33:27 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE GARDNER inquired as to why Absolute Services, Inc., is the only bid.

MS. VARNI said that the building manager has worked with Absolute Services, Inc., and Legislative Council recently approved a contract with Absolute Services, Inc., to perform the asbestos abatement in the capitol building boiler room. Therefore, the company is on site now. She informed the committee that a bid abstract was done that requested bid quotes from Alaska Abatement Corp. and Arrowhead Building Contractors, both of which declined to bid. Therefore, required procurement procedures were followed. Ms. Varni opined that bids from the non-responding companies would've likely been substantially higher because they would've had to travel to Juneau whereas Absolute Services, Inc., is already in town.

[1:35:09 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE HERRON asked if the asbestos is friable.

[1:35:20 PM](#)

DON JOHNSTON, Building Manager, Legislative Affairs Agency, replied yes and noted his agreement with Representative Herron that the bid is so high because the asbestos is friable.

CHAIR COGHILL related his understanding that the asbestos has to be sealed and disposed at an approved site.

MR. JOHNSTON explained that currently the area is quarantined and pre-demolition air monitoring is performed as required. The air monitoring continues throughout the abatement and upon completion of the project. This air monitoring is performed by a separate entity in order to avoid self-monitoring.

[1:37:41 PM](#)

There being no objection, the bid by Absolute Services, Inc., in the amount of \$33,800 for asbestos abatement on the second floor of the capitol building was approved.

Authorization to go to bid for remodeling Speaker's Office and  
Majority Leader's Office

1:37:56 PM

CHAIR COGHILL then turned the committee's attention to the lighting and ceiling remodel in both the Speaker's and Majority Leader's offices. He noted that the Speaker's Office had a decorative ceiling and is at a different level than the House Rules Office, a portion of which will be assumed by the Speaker's Office.

1:38:46 PM

MR. JOHNSTON explained that the request is to use specialty cast plaster ceiling tiles with recessed lighting and pendant lighting in the Speaker's Office and acoustic panels with recessed lighting in the staff office areas. The existing ceiling in the Speaker's Office has the original plaster ceiling with hand stenciled artwork whereas the House Rules Chair's office has a regular plaster ceiling. Mr. Johnston explained that he doesn't want to drill into the ceiling of the Speaker's Office, and therefore he has requested an engineer be involved to design a ceiling joist system that would span from the exterior wall to the interior corridor wall in the specialty ceiling area only, from which the new cast plaster ceiling would hang. In the House Rules Office, the new ceiling can be hung from the original ceiling.

1:40:40 PM

MS. VARNI interjected that no new ceiling or lighting will be hung in the caucus room or the reception area of the Speaker's Office. She clarified the specific ceiling locations.

1:41:20 PM

MR. JOHNSTON, in response to Representative Gardner, confirmed that the hand stenciled work on the ceiling will be saved, which is the reason for involving the engineer to design a ceiling joist system from which to hang the new ceiling.

1:41:52 PM

REPRESENTATIVE HERRON moved that the House Rules Standing Committee approve the solicitation, award, and expenditure of Session Expenses funds to upgrade the lighting and ceilings in

the Speaker's and House Majority Leader's offices in the capitol.

CHAIR COGHILL informed the committee that the estimated cost is \$50,000-\$70,000.

[1:42:27 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE GARDNER inquired as to what would happen if the bid is in excess of \$50,000-\$70,000.

CHAIR COGHILL responded that the matter would come back before the committee.

MS. VARNI expressed hope that if the bid is a bit higher that the authorization doesn't have to come back before the committee. She clarified that \$50,000-\$70,000 is her estimate of the cost and she would let the chair know if the bid is higher, at which time he could decide if it's necessary to have a meeting.

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CHAIR COGHILL noted his agreement, adding that if the bid is within the realm of reason there wouldn't be a need to have a meeting.

[1:43:33 PM](#)

There being no objection, the motion to authorize the solicitation, award, and expenditure of Session Expenses funds to upgrade the lighting and ceilings in the Speaker's and House Majority Leader's offices in the capitol was approved.

[1:44:12 PM](#)

#### **ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further business before the committee, the House Rules Standing Committee meeting was adjourned at 1:44 p.m.