

**ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE
LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL
MAY 26, 2015
4:15 PM**

MEMBERS PRESENT

Senator Gary Stevens, Chair
Representative Bob Herron, Vice Chair
Senator John Coghill
Senator Charlie Huggins
Senator Kevin Meyer
Senator Peter Micciche
Representative Mike Chenault
Representative Craig Johnson
Representative Sam Kito
Representative Charisse Millett
Representative Mark Neuman
Representative Steve Thompson, alternate

MEMBERS ABSENT

Senator Lyman Hoffman
Senator Anna MacKinnon
Senator Lesil McGuire, alternate
Representative Mike Hawker

OTHER MEMBERS PRESENT

Representatives Guttenberg, Vazquez, Wilson and Drummond

AGENDA

APPROVAL OF AGENDA
APPROVAL OF MINUTES
RATIFICATION OF CHARITY EVENTS
CONTRACT APPROVALS - OVR LEASE RENEWAL
FY 16 AGENCY BUDGET CUT APPROVAL
OTHER COMMITTEE BUSINESS

SPEAKER REGISTER

Pam Varni, Executive Director, Legislative Affairs Agency

[4:15:37 PM](#)

- I. **CHAIR GARY STEVENS** called the Legislative Council meeting to order at 4:15 p.m. in the Anchorage Legislative Information Office Auditorium. Present at the call were Senators Meyer, Coghill, Huggins, Micciche, and Stevens; Representatives Kito, Millett, and Herron. Representatives Chenault, Johnson, Neuman and Thompson, alternate member, joined the meeting after the roll call. Senators Hoffman, MacKinnon, and McGuire, alternate member, and Representative Hawker were absent.

II. **APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

[4:16:37 PM](#)

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

The agenda was approved with no objections.

III. **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

- a. April 2, 2015
- b. April 9, 2015
- c. April 13, 2015

[4:16:48 PM](#)

VICE CHAIR HERRON moved that Legislative Council approve the minutes of April 2, April 9, and April 13, 2015, meetings as presented.

CHAIR STEVENS asked members if there were any corrections to or comments about the minutes presented. There were no corrections or comments.

The minutes were approved as presented with no objections.

IV. **RATIFICATION OF CHARITY EVENTS**

- a. Kenai Peninsula Fair 10th Annual Celebrity Waiter Event
- b. Hospice & Home Care of Juneau - An Evening of Beer and Wine Tasting
- c. Kenai River Sportfishing Assoc. - Kenai River Jr. Classic, Kenai River Classic, and Kenai River Women's Classic
- d. Outdoor Heritage Foundation of Alaska - Midnight Sun Charity Shoot
- e. Legislative Skits
- f. Alaska Resource Education 23rd Annual Coal Classic Golf Tournament
- g. Juneau Friends of the NRA Spring Fundraising Banquet

[4:17:13 PM](#)

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

Kenai Peninsula Fair 10th Annual Celebrity Waiter Event;
Hospice & Home Care of Juneau - An Evening of Beer and Wine Tasting;
Kenai River Sportfishing Assoc. - Kenai River Jr. Classic, Kenai River Classic, and Kenai River Women's Classic;
Outdoor Heritage Foundation of Alaska - Midnight Sun Charity Shoot;
Legislative Skits;
Alaska Resource Education 23rd Annual Coal Classic Golf Tournament; and
Juneau Friends of the NRA Spring Fundraising Banquet.

CHAIR STEVENS noted that all of the above organizations have 501(c)(3) non-profit status.

The motion passed with no objections.

V. OVR LEASE APPROVAL

[4:18:36 PM](#)

VICE CHAIR HERRON moved that Legislative Council approve Renewal No. 3 of the Lease Extension with L92 LLC for OVR for \$53,963.64 for July 1, 2015 - June 30, 2016.

CHAIR STEVENS objected for discussion.

PAM VARNI, Executive Director of the Legislative Affairs Agency, said that Renewal Lease No. 2 would expire on June 30, 2015, and what was before Council was Renewal Lease No. 3 for the period of July 1, 2015 - June 30, 2016, for the Office of Victims' Rights. OVR has been in this space since 2002.

SENATOR COGHILL asked if, after this renewal, there was one more lease extension and then the whole contract would have to be renewed.

MS. VARNI confirmed that was her understanding and that then the Agency would go out to bid for a new lease contract.

REPRESENTATIVE KITO asked for clarification that Renewal No. 3 was indeed the last renewal of the current lease. Some discussion followed about whether there were

additional lease renewals available after Renewal No. 3. The Procurement Officer was not available and Ms. Varni said she would get back to the Chair with that information.

A roll call vote was taken.

YEAS: Coghill, Huggins, Micciche, Chenault, Johnson, Kito, Millett, Herron, Stevens

NAYS: None

The motion passed 9-0.

[Senator Meyer was not present for the vote.]

VI. FY 16 AGENCY BUDGET CUT APPROVAL

[4:22:46 PM](#)

VICE CHAIR HERRON moved that Legislative Council approve the presented FY 16 budget cuts prepared by the Executive Director to Administrative Services, Information & Teleconference, and Legal & Research Services.

CHAIR STEVENS objected for discussion.

MS. VARNI described for members the details in her May 19, 2015, memo summarizing the FY 16 budget reductions made to Administrative Services, Information & Technology, and Legal & Research Services in the total amount of \$1,718,700. She said the reduction results in 23 less positions for the Agency in FY 16. Administrative Services component for the last two years has lapsed \$1,680 and \$3,669 in FY 14 and FY 15 respectively. The FY 16 reduction has also resulted in a reduction in dues to legislative organizations, travel, commodities, and equipment.

She said that in past practices, Legislative Council has approved any reductions to the Legislative Information Offices throughout the state. Due to the FY 16 budget reductions, the Agency has proposed two Legislative Information Assistant positions go from 12 months to 6 months - one in the Fairbanks LIO and one in the Mat-Su LIO. Further, the Agency proposes to reduce two Information Officer positions from 12 months to 6 months - one in the Barrow LIO and one in the Kotzebue LIO; in this Senate district, there are currently three year-round LIOs. The majority of Senate districts have one LIO that is year-round and the other are session-only LIOs. With this proposed reduction, the Senate district for Senator Donny

Olson would go from three year-round LIOs to one year-round LIOs and two session-only LIOs.

CHAIR STEVENS said this was a very complex issue and it was very painful to make these reductions. He asked Ms. Varni to provide further detail about the 23 positions eliminated from the Legislative Affairs Agency on the record so that everyone knows that we are talking about real jobs.

MS. VARNI said that one of the positions was a Supply Assistant and was also the Capitol Tour Coordinator as well as nine Capitol Tour Guides were eliminated. She said that she received direction from the Senate Finance Committee to eliminate the tour guide operation. The Agency has conducted more than 14,000 guided tours during the 2014 visitor season and many thousands more that do self-guided tours. She noted that this year and next, due to the exterior remodel of the Capitol, tours are not being allowed to ensure the safety of both the visitors and the construction workers, especially with no tour guides to help with that issue.

Ms. Varni said that out of the 23 positions eliminated, three were vacant: a Machine Operator in the Print Shop and two Custodian positions. She noted that this reflects that the Agency had been utilizing all their positions. She went on to say that three positions were eliminated in Research as well as several positions in Information Services and a Maintenance worker. The FY 16 budget reduction has really impacted the Agency. She said LAA went through some major budget cuts in 1985 when oil prices went down and the Agency hasn't been faced with the elimination of so many positions since then. She said it has been very difficult and the staff in those eliminated positions have been given their layoff notices.

REPRESENTATIVE KITO said he wanted to remind everyone here, understanding the fiscal situation that the State is in, that each one of those 23 positions is an individual, an individual with children and families that are trying to make a living and 23 jobs that will not be available in Juneau, or at least a fair number of them. He said he thought about the dramatic decrease in spending on Research and Legal and their ability to support all 60 Legislators; hoping that we were going to be able to provide the services that we have in the past but also recognizing that this, among other State agency cuts, is going to be a significant impact to his community. Specifically regarding the Capitol tours, he said it was very important to

understand that 14,000 tourists come through the Capitol in a normal season; he said he hoped that we would have the ability to somehow provide for tours, to have people understand the importance of the Capitol in Juneau and would welcome working with the Executive Director over the next two years to figure out a way to have guided tours in the Capitol City.

CHAIR STEVENS said he appreciated the Representative's underlying of that issue - these are real people with real jobs, many of them, and when one looks through the list, one would see people that have impacted all Legislators in Research, Legal and the Help Desk. He said they would feel the pinch, although obviously not as these individuals will be, but we understand the impact it will have on the community. He said these are real cuts that end in 23 less positions.

REPRESENTATIVE NEUMAN asked for clarification on the vote - a yes vote is to accept the reductions? Chair Stevens confirmed that a yes vote was to accept the reductions and all of the eliminations listed as well as the reductions to the LIOs listed on the second page.

A roll call vote was taken.

YEAS: Coghill, Huggins, Micciche, Chenault, Johnson, Millett, Neuman, Thompson, Herron, Stevens

NAYS: Kito

The motion passed 10-1.

VII. OTHER COMMITTEE BUSINESS
a. Lawsuit Update by Doug Gardner
b. Anchorage LIO Security

[4:32:40 PM](#)

VICE CHAIR HERRON moved that Legislative Council go into Executive Session under Uniform Rule 22 (b)(3) and (4) for the discussion of a matter that may, by law, be required to be confidential; and for the discussion of a matter the public knowledge of which would adversely affect the security of a governmental unit. He asked that the following individuals remain online: Doug Gardner and Linda Hay; and that the following individuals remain in the room: Pam Varni, Katrina Matheny, Steve Daigle and Mike Warendia. Also, any Legislators that are not on Legislative Council may remain in the room.

The motion passed with no objections and Legislative Council went into Executive Session.

5:41:05 PM

Legislative Council came out of Executive Session.

CHAIR STEVENS advised members that the next Legislative Council meeting would be in late June.

There being no further business before the committee, the Legislative Council meeting was adjourned at 5:42 p.m.

NOTE: Due to technical difficulties, there is no audio recording of the meeting after Legislative Council came out of Executive Session.