

**ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE
SENATE RULES STANDING COMMITTEE
ANCHORAGE LIO**

December 16, 2019
12:01 p.m.

MEMBERS PRESENT

Senator John Coghill, Chair
Senator Cathy Giessel, Vice Chair
Senator Natasha von Imhof
Senator Tom Begich
Senator Lyman Hoffman
Senator Reinbold (online)

COMMITTEE CALENDAR

DISCUSS SENATE VAN REPLACEMENT

- HEARD

PREVIOUS COMMITTEE ACTION

No previous action to record

WITNESS REGISTER

JC KESTEL, Procurement Officer
Legislative Affairs Agency
Alaska State Legislature
Juneau, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Requested the Senate Rules Committee consider replacing the Senate van used for session transportation.

ACTION NARRATIVE

[12:01:15 PM](#)

CHAIR JOHN COGHILL called the Senate Rules Standing Committee meeting to order at 12:01 p.m. Present at the call to order were Senators von Imhof, Begich, Giessel, Hoffman, and Chair Coghill.

DISCUSS SENATE VAN REPLACEMENT

[12:01:36 PM](#)

CHAIR COGHILL announced that the business before the Senate Rules Committee is to consider buying a new vehicle for the Senate and selling the old one. He asked Mr. Kestel to talk committee members through the van replacement proposal.

[12:02:35 PM](#)

JC KESTEL, Procurement Officer, Legislative Affairs Agency, Alaska State Legislature, Juneau, Alaska, explained that he is respectfully requesting the committee consider replacing the 2003 Ford Excursion used during session for Senate transportation. The 17-year-old van is showing wear and tear and has had major mechanical issues in the last few years. Keeping it on the road safely will probably be expensive.

He stated that at the request of the Senate Rules Committee, he researched requests for quotation (RFQ) to purchase a new all-wheel-drive vehicle reaching out to dealerships throughout the state and Seattle. He received quotes from five dealerships in Fairbanks, Anchorage, Juneau, and Seattle. The lowest bid was received from a dealership in Juneau for a Toyota Sienna, which is all-wheel-drive. The dealership offered an extra discount off the manufacturer's suggested retail price along with rebates that are valid through December 2019. A Toyota Sienna that meets the RFQ is scheduled for delivery to the dealership between December 16-23.

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CHAIR COGHILL noted that there are no [domestic] all-wheel-drive vans being manufactured now but there will be in a few years.

MR. KESTEL replied Dodge will introduce an all-wheel-drive van in a year or two.

CHAIR COGHILL commented that Toyota has a proven track record. He noted that other all-wheel-drive vehicles have a much larger frame, like the current Senate vehicle which has been awkward in the Capitol's small parking lot. He said that is why he favors the Toyota Sienna.

MR. KESTEL explained that one of the selection criteria was easier access and egress. The Toyota Sienna is lower to the ground than the existing van and has easier access to the third row.

CHAIR COGHILL added that the Toyota Sienna has sliding doors on both sides for easy access.

MR. KESTEL agreed that the van would not restrict anybody's ability to get in and out.

SENATOR VON IMHOF asked the color of the Toyota Sienna.

MR. KESTEL answered it is called Parisian Night Pearl, similar in color to the field of the Alaska flag.

[12:07:31 PM](#)

SENATOR BEGICH pointed out that the lowest of the five bids comes from a dealer in Juneau and is available immediately. He asked a Mr. Kestel to list some of the safety issues with the old Ford Excursion.

MR. KESTEL replied the primary safety issue is loose front end steering and the drive line. To correct the problem would cost well over \$12,000. The brakes have been wearing quickly and it's difficult for some of the pages to drive because it's so large.

[12:09:54 PM](#)

SENATOR BEGICH opined that the timing for this purchase is perfect. The current van has safety issues and potentially high maintenance costs. If the new van is used for even two-thirds as long as the old van the cost will be less than \$2,000 a year. He described the purchase as a great idea.

CHAIR COGHILL highlighted that the Toyota Sienna will carry one less passenger but will be easier to maneuver and park and it has easier access.

SENATOR GIESSEL pointed out that the proposed van seats six passengers and the Ford Excursion seats seven passengers.

MR. KESTEL clarified that the Toyota Sienna seats seven passengers with a driver and the Ford Excursion seats eight with a driver.

SENATOR GIESSEL asked if the proposal is strictly for a Senate vehicle.

MR. KESTEL answered yes.

SENATOR GIESSEL said she noted that the \$1,000 or \$1,750 trade-in value for the Ford Excursion is quite low. She noted that Mr. Kestel's proposal is to sell the Ford Excursion at auction.

MR. KESTEL said he recommends sending the old van to the Alaska Department of Transportation for their online public auction process. He noted that the dealership in Juneau was only offering a \$1,000 trade-in value. He said he believes the Ford Excursion can be sold for significantly more at public auction.

[12:12:17 PM](#)

CHAIR COGHILL explained that the committee meeting was required for the vehicle purchase.

MR. KESTEL agreed. He explained that the committee of the whole is required because the purchase exceeds \$35,000.

SENATOR HOFFMAN noted that a Toyota dealership he dealt with at one time recommended using [Bridgestone] Blizzak winter tires. He asked what tires are on the Toyota Sienna.

MR. KESTEL replied the van will come with standard stock tires and purchasing after-market winter tires would be the Senate's responsibility, if desired. He said since the van is all-wheel drive, he would recommend purchasing studless tires like Bridgestone Blizzak.

CHAIR COGHILL noted that Blizzak tires aren't recommended for a lot of highway driving, but that isn't an issue in Juneau.

SENATOR HOFFMAN suggested that the tires could be switched for summer and winter.

CHAIR COGHILL opined that he did not know if switching tires is needed with the amount of miles put on during the summer. He said he would recommend the Blizzak tire over any studded tire.

He solicited a motion to approve the purchase of the 2020 Toyota Sienna.

[12:14:09 PM](#)

SENATOR GIESSEL moved that the Senate Rules Committee approve the purchase of the 2020 Toyota Sienna van from Mendenhall Auto Center for the purchase price of \$38,849.

[12:14:26 PM](#)

CHAIR COGHILL announced that hearing no objection the motion is approved to purchase the 2020 Toyota Sienna.

12:14:55 PM

CHAIR COGHILL noted that Senator Reinbold was present online during the committee meeting.

12:14:58 PM

There being no further business to come before the committee, Chair Coghill adjourned the Senate Rules Standing Committee meeting at 12:14 p.m.