

ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE
SELECT COMMITTEE ON LEGISLATIVE ETHICS
APRIL 13, 2021
9:00 AM

FULL COMMITTEE MEETING

[9:02:41 AM](#)

1. CALL THE MEETING TO ORDER

Lee Holmes called the meeting to order at 9:03 a.m. on Tuesday, April 13, 2021.

Lee Holmes directed Jerry Anderson to conduct roll call.

Roll call

Sen David Wilson (telephonic)
Sen Tom Begich (telephonic)
Rep Chris Tuck (Alternate for Rep Sara Hannan) (telephonic)
Rep DeLena Johnson (telephonic)
Skip Cook (telephonic)
Conner Thomas (telephonic)
Joyce Anderson
Deb Fancher (telephonic)
Lee Holmes (telephonic)

Quorum present.

Others present

Jerry Anderson
Jacqui Yeagle
Senator Elvi Gray-Jackson (telephonic)

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2. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Lee Holmes stated that the meeting was expected to run about 45 minutes, then entertained a motion to approve the agenda.

Motion made by: Senator Tom Begich

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There were no objections. The agenda was approved.

3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Lee Holmes introduced the next item on the agenda: approval of the minutes of the September 22, 2020, committee meetings.

Conner Thomas made a motion to approve the September 22, 2020, full committee meeting minutes.

There were no objections. The September 22, 2020, full committee meeting minutes were approved.

Senator Tom Begich moved to approve the September 22, 2020, senate subcommittee meeting minutes.

There were no objections. The September 22, 2020, senate subcommittee meeting minutes were approved.

4. PUBLIC COMMENT

Lee Holmes entertained public comment. There was no public comment.

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5. ELECTION OF COMMITTEE CHAIRS FOR 2021-2022

Lee Holmes opened election of officers for 2021-2022.

Joyce Anderson reviewed for the committee's benefit the officer positions held 2019-2020: Joyce Anderson, senate subcommittee chair; Deb Fancher, senate subcommittee vice chair; Lee Holmes, house subcommittee chair; and Conner Thomas, house subcommittee vice chair.

Lee Holmes opened nominations for senate subcommittee chair.

Conner Thomas confirmed his understanding that the chair of the senate subcommittee will also be the chair of the full committee for the remainder of 2021.

Conner Thomas asked Deb Fancher if she would agree to the position.

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Deb Fancher replied that she was agreeable to assuming the chair position if no one else wanted the position.

Conner Thomas nominated Deb Fancher chair of the senate subcommittee.

Lee Holmes asked Jerry Anderson if the nomination required a second.

Jerry Anderson responded that traditionally seconds have not been required for officer nominations and further, if there were only one nomination per position, the committee voted for the slate of officers, rather than conducting an individual vote for each office.

Lee Holmes thanked Jerry Anderson for his reply, then entertained other nominations for the senate subcommittee chair position.

Hearing no other nominations, Lee Holmes entertained interest in the senate subcommittee vice chair position.

Joyce Anderson declared her interest in the senate subcommittee vice chair position and asked if a committee member would agree to nominate her.

Conner Thomas nominated Joyce Anderson for the senate subcommittee vice chair position.

Lee Holmes entertained other nominations, heard none, and moved to the house subcommittee chair position. He advised the committee that the current vice chair was Conner Thomas, and then he asked if Conner Thomas was interested in the chair position.

Conner Thomas replied that he would be happy to do so.

Deb Fancher nominated Conner Thomas for the house subcommittee chair position.

Lee Holmes asked if there were other nominations for the house subcommittee chair position. Hearing no other nominations, Lee Holmes entertained interest in the house subcommittee vice chair position.

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Conner Thomas nominated Skip Cook for the position of house subcommittee vice chair.

Lee Holmes inquired whether Skip Cook had an objection to the nomination. Hearing no objection from Skip Cook, Lee Holmes entertained other nominations for the position.

Hearing no other nominations, Lee Holmes entertained a motion to cease all nominations.

Conner Thomas so moved.

Lee Holmes stated that given there was only one nomination per officer position, the committee would vote for the slate of officers as presented: Deb Fancher, senate subcommittee chair; Joyce Anderson, senate subcommittee vice chair; Conner Thomas, house subcommittee chair; and Skip Cook, house subcommittee vice chair.

Lee Holmes asked Jerry Anderson to conduct a roll call vote.

Roll call vote

Senator David Wilson	Y
Representative Chris Tuck	Y
Skip Cook	Y
Conner Thomas	Y
Representative DeLena Johnson	Y
Joyce Anderson	Y
Deb Fancher	Y
Lee Holmes	Y
Senator Tom Begich	Y

The slate of officers was approved.

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Lee Holmes asked new Committee Chair Deb Fancher if she wanted him to continue chairing the meeting and to take on the post meeting responsibilities. Deb Fancher replied affirmatively and thanked Lee Holmes.

6. CHAIR/STAFF REPORT

a. Management Log Review

Lee Holmes directed the committee to the management log review.

Jerry Anderson asked the committee members to review the informal advice per AS 24.60.158 and to ask follow-up questions.

Lee Holmes asked if committee members had questions for Jerry Anderson.

Senator Tom Begich asked Jerry Anderson if there was a particularly unique or substantive question to which he would like to call the committee's attention.

Jerry Anderson responded that unique in the last year were the many election-related questions, especially those questions about putting absentee ballot information and applications into newsletters, which is generally allowed.

Another unique question concerned whether a board membership disclosure was required for a world-wide organization that lacked a physical meeting location or address. Jerry Anderson said that a disclosure would be required and submitted that it was a demonstration of how far reaching is the boards and commissions disclosure requirement.

Senator Tom Begich thanked Jerry Anderson for his response.

Lee Holmes asked if there were other questions. Hearing no other questions, he moved to the next agenda item.

b. Public Member Committee Appointment Update

Lee Holmes directed the committee's attention to the resumes of Public Member Skip Cook and Public Alternate Member Gerald McBeath.

Conner Thomas asked if the public members had been ratified by the legislature.

Jerry Anderson replied that they had been ratified by both bodies.

Lee Holmes asked for committee comments or questions. Hearing none, he moved to the next agenda item.

c. Ethics Disclosures

Lee Holmes directed the committee's attention to the three documents related to ethics disclosures and commented that it was interesting to see how the numbers change over the years. Lee Holmes asked if there were questions about the information.

Jerry Anderson pointed out that in 2020 there was a decrease in the number of gift/travel disclosures, likely due to COVID, and that the drop in the total number of disclosures submitted in 2020 was due almost entirely to that one category.

Jerry Anderson added for the benefit of the members that the three documents consisted of 1) the total number of disclosures submitted in 2020; 2) a year-to-year comparison of disclosure totals submitted 2017-2020; and 3) the total number of disclosures of each type submitted to date in 2021.

Lee Holmes thanked Jerry Anderson and asked Joyce Anderson if she had a question.

Joyce Anderson replied that she wondered why there were significantly fewer contracts, leases, and grants disclosures submitted to date in 2021 than there were in 2020. She noted that in 2020, 19 senators, one house member, and three staffers had submitted disclosures, and in 2021 that number was dramatically reduced. She asked Jerry Anderson if he had any comment.

Jerry Anderson said he had not looked at that specifically but proposed emailing an answer back to committee members.

Joyce Anderson expressed concern that there may be some legislators who should have filed but did not. She thanked the chair for the opportunity to ask her question.

Lee Holmes thanked Joyce Anderson and entertained other follow-up questions about the ethics disclosures documents.

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There were no other questions and he moved to the next item.

d. Update: Collection of Unpaid Fines

Lee Holmes asked Jerry Anderson if there were any unpaid fines.

Jerry Anderson replied that former Representative Alan Dick's unpaid balance from a long ago, large fine stands at \$3,695. He added that a new, recent fine of \$25, assessed on April 8, is outstanding but filers have a 30-day payment window so it is not considered late.

Lee Holmes asked about the procedure for handling large fines.

Jerry Anderson replied that the ethics office had been receiving from former Representative Alan Dick almost monthly payments averaging about \$100 a month. He added that Representative Alan Dick is making good faith efforts toward paying the fine.

Senator Tom Begich asked Jerry Anderson to repeat the remaining amount of the fine.

Jerry Anderson replied that \$3,695 remains on the fine.

Senator Tom Begich thanked Jerry Anderson for the information.

Lee Holmes entertained other questions about unpaid fines. Hearing none, he moved to the next agenda item.

e. New internship program: Seattle University School of Law

Lee Holmes introduced the new externship program with Seattle University School of Law and he asked Jerry Anderson if he had a comment about the externship.

Jerry Anderson replied that the ethics office maintains a list of approved universities and organizations that have internship programs. The Seattle University School of Law program was reviewed and approved by the administrator and the committee chair. Procedurally, then, the program information moves to the full committee for further review and approval. Jerry Anderson noted that in this case, the program is called an externship as opposed to an internship.

Lee Holmes asked if committee members had comments or questions about the program.

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Joyce Anderson commented that the committee requires a final report from the individual who fills the position but she did not see mention of the final report in the material submitted. She referred the question to Jerry Anderson.

Jerry Anderson concurred that a final report was required and expected and noted that the committee did not receive the full packet of 16-20 pages of material about the externship.

Lee Holmes commented that on the second page of the profile there is a statement that the agency must provide an evaluation upon completion. He stated that the evaluation would include the final report requirement.

Joyce Anderson thanked the chair for directing her attention to the section.

Lee Holmes asked for other questions of the committee. Hearing none, he moved to the next agenda item.

f. Publications

Lee Holmes introduced the 2020 Public Decisions Booklet and asked if Jerry Anderson had comments to share with the committee.

Jerry Anderson said it was a very thin booklet because there was only one public decision published in 2020.

Lee Holmes entertained questions or comments from the committee. Hearing none, he moved to the next publication.

Lee Holmes asked Jerry Anderson if he had comments for the committee about the 2021 Standards of Conduct Handbook and the revision.

Jerry Anderson responded that the only revision was the addition of the Seattle University School of Law externship program.

Lee Holmes thanked Jerry Anderson and asked if committee members had questions about the handbook. Hearing none, he moved to the next agenda item.

7. 2021 ETHICS TRAINING

Lee Holmes asked Jerry Anderson to provide the committee with an overview of the 2021 ethics training.

Jerry Anderson said that training consisted of two segments delivered by National Conference of State Legislatures staff (NCSL) and one segment by the ethics office. NCSL sessions, which were delivered via Zoom during the training period, reached 472 people.

Recorded versions of all of the ethics training are available online to meet the training requirement for new employees and staff. As of April 12, a total of 541 persons had been trained. Two new staff had yet to be trained.

Lee Holmes asked if the committee had questions for Jerry Anderson.

There were no questions. Lee Holmes moved to the next agenda item.

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8. BUDGET

Lee Holmes directed the committee's attention to the FY21 Budget Summary and the FY22 Budget Request Detail. He asked Jerry Anderson if there was anything of particular note in the documents.

Jerry Anderson commented that the budget summary shows that, due to current circumstances, spending for this year is significantly lower. Meetings have been telephonic and no travel funds, investigator funds, or outside attorney funds have been expended.

Jerry Anderson added that HB 69 shows the proposed funding for FY22 is flat.

Lee Holmes asked if committee members had questions about either the current budget or the proposed budget. There were no questions. He thanked Jerry Anderson and moved to the next agenda item.

9. CONTRACT REPORT

Lee Holmes reported that in FY21 there had been no outside counsel or investigator contracts and therefore, no expenditures. He asked Jerry Anderson if he had comments to add.

Jerry Anderson replied that no ethics complaints had required the services of either outside counsel or an investigator.

Lee Holmes entertained questions or concerns about the contract report. Hearing no comments, he asked Jerry Anderson to present a legislation update.

Jerry Anderson responded that there were a number of bills listed under the ethics subject summary. House Judiciary recently amended HB 62 to allow legislators to accept travel and hospitality primarily for the purpose of solemnizing a marriage under AS 25.05.261(a)(4), which would also change the conflict of interest statute AS 24.60.030(a). He added that an example from the hearing was that a legislator could accept a helicopter ride to solemnize a marriage at a wedding held on a glacier.

Lee Holmes asked for comments or questions from the committee about the proposed legislation. Hearing none, Lee Holmes moved to the next agenda item.

10. OTHER BUSINESS

Lee Holmes entertained discussion of other business. There was no other business and Lee Holmes entertained a motion to adjourn.

11. ADJOURN

Motion made by: Senator Tom Begich

No objections.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:40 a.m.

[9:40:37 AM](#)