

HOUSE FINANCE COMMITTEE
April 5, 2024
3:49 p.m.

[3:49:19 PM](#)

CALL TO ORDER

Co-Chair Johnson called the House Finance Committee meeting to order at 3:49 p.m.

MEMBERS PRESENT

Representative Bryce Edgmon, Co-Chair
Representative Neal Foster, Co-Chair
Representative DeLena Johnson, Co-Chair
Representative Julie Coulombe
Representative Mike Cronk
Representative Alyse Galvin
Representative Sara Hannan
Representative Andy Josephson
Representative Dan Ortiz
Representative Frank Tomaszewski

MEMBERS ABSENT

Representative Will Stapp

ALSO PRESENT

None

SUMMARY

HB 268 APPROP: OPERATING BUDGET; CAP; SUPP; AM

CSHB 268(FIN) was REPORTED out of committee with three "do pass" recommendations, two "no recommendation" recommendations, and five "amend" recommendations.

HB 270 APPROP: MENTAL HEALTH BUDGET

CSHB 270(FIN) was REPORTED out of committee with six "do pass" recommendations, three "no

recommendation" recommendations, and one "amend"
recommendation.

HB 368 ELECTRICAL ENERGY & ENERGY PORTFOLIO STDS

HB 368 was SCHEDULED but not HEARD.

Co-Chair Johnson reviewed the meeting agenda.

#hb268

#hb270

HOUSE BILL NO. 268

"An Act making appropriations for the operating and loan program expenses of state government and for certain programs; capitalizing funds; amending appropriations; making capital appropriations; making supplemental appropriations; making reappropriations; making appropriations under art. IX, sec. 17(c), Constitution of the State of Alaska, from the constitutional budget reserve fund; and providing for an effective date."

HOUSE BILL NO. 270

"An Act making appropriations for the operating and capital expenses of the state's integrated comprehensive mental health program; and providing for an effective date."

[3:50:33 PM](#)

Co-Chair Johnson relayed that the committee substitutes incorporated all of the amendments adopted in the budget process with no additional changes. She thanked committee members for their candor and respect throughout the budget process. She remarked that members did not always agree on issues, but she thought it was what made the process work. She knew all committee members wanted to do what was right for the state. The committee adopted 19 minority amendments and she was proud of the collaborative process. The budget included one-time funding equal to a \$680 increase to the Base Student Allocation (BSA), funding to support essential services for the most vulnerable Alaskans, and funded what would be the third largest Permanent Fund Dividend (PFD) in the state's history, all while leaving a \$100 million surplus for FY 25. She stated that no budget was perfect,

but given the revenue constraints, the committee had done some tremendous work. She highlighted it was the beginning step of a very robust process. She looked forward to all members of the legislature as the budget moved through the process. She thanked all of the members' staff who had helped in the process including her staff Matt Gruening and Remond Henderson.

[3:52:54 PM](#)

Co-Chair Edgmon MOVED to ADOPT the proposed committee substitute for HB 268, Work Draft 33-GH2492\Y (Marx, 4/4/24).

There being NO OBJECTION, Work Draft 33-GH2492\Y was ADOPTED.

Co-Chair Edgmon MOVED to REPORT CSHB 268(FIN) out of committee with individual recommendations.

Representative Josephson OBJECTED for discussion. He stated that the due process was outstanding, and he was grateful for the time given to minority members. He did not know that a \$2,300 PFD was affordable, and it involved clawing back Constitutional Budget Reserve (CBR) monies and moving some of the surpluses into the PFD column, which would primarily be decided in conference committee. He remarked that he may arrive at a yes vote on the floor, but he highlighted areas of concern. He noted that 20 to 30 individuals had provided public testimony in support of additional funding for care providers. He pointed out that an amendment to help them do their work did not pass. He thought an amendment providing a 5 percent increase for senior and disabilities grants requested by AGEnet should have been adopted and he thought funding for three positions for adult protective services recommended by the ombudsman should have been adopted. Additionally, he believed the request for an additional \$3 million for the Council on Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault (CDVSA) should have been included. He stated the items were disappointing and he looked forward to debate on the House floor. He WITHDREW the OBJECTION.

[3:56:26 PM](#)

Representative Ortiz OBJECTED for discussion. He joined his colleague in thanking the co-chair for the process and the

way the meetings had been conducted. He shared the concerns raised by Representative Josephson. Additionally, he highlighted his support for the Alaska Seafood Marketing Institute (ASMI) and Alaska Travel Industry Association (ATIA). He believed support for ASMI and ATIA needed further discussion on the House floor. He was in favor of funding for the agencies to support the overall economy and Alaska workforce.

Representative Galvin thanked the co-chair for the process, which she believed was very fair. She looked forward to the ongoing process on the floor to be more protective of children. Additionally, she believed the budget could do more to support vulnerable families, transportation, and inflationary costs.

Representative Ortiz WITHDREW the OBJECTION.

There being NO further OBJECTION, CSHB 268(FIN) was REPORTED out of committee with three "do pass" recommendations, two "no recommendation" recommendations, and five "amend" recommendations.

3:59:10 PM

AT EASE

4:01:13 PM

RECONVENED

Co-Chair Edgmon MOVED to ADOPT the proposed committee substitute for HB 270, Work Draft 33-GH2490\R (Marx, 4/4/24).

Co-Chair Johnson noted there were no changes to the bill other than amendments adopted by the committee.

There being NO OBJECTION, Work Draft 33-GH2490\R was ADOPTED.

Co-Chair Edgmon MOVED to REPORT CSHB 270(FIN) out of committee with individual recommendations.

Representative Hannan OBJECTED for discussion. She discussed the effort the committee had undertaken to incorporate many of the Alaska Mental Health Trust Authority (AMHTA) priorities. She highlighted funds for Crisis Now and housing assistance. She stated that AMHTA

trustees had high needs and there was a high financial cost. She elaborated that collectively they were some of the more complicated policy issues to address. She stated that the budget addressed many of the issues at the level the AMTHA board requested. She appreciated Co-Chair Johnson's leadership and the efforts of many of the committee members to see that the items were funded. She WITHDREW the OBJECTION.

There being NO further OBJECTION, CSHB 270(FIN) was REPORTED out of committee with six "do pass" recommendations, three "no recommendation" recommendations, and one "amend" recommendation.

[4:04:09 PM](#)
AT EASE

[4:06:07 PM](#)
RECONVENED

Co-Chair Johnson thanked members and staff for their work. She reviewed the schedule for the following week.

ADJOURNMENT

[4:07:17 PM](#)

The meeting was adjourned at 4:07 p.m.