

Minutes of the Joint Legislative Oversight Committee
October 9, 1998
Senate Majority Caucus Room, Statehouse
Boise, Idaho

Co-chair Senator Bruce Sweeney called the meeting to order at 8:45 a.m. Committee members Senators Atwell Parry, Grant Ipsen and Lin Whitworth, and Representatives Robert C. Geddes and June Judd were in attendance. Staff members Nancy Van Maren and Margaret Campbell also were present, as were staff Ned Parrish and Eric Milstead. Representatives Bruce Newcomb and Larry Watson joined the meeting in progress.

Co-chair Sweeney opened the meeting with a review of the minutes. **Representative Geddes moved to approve the minutes of the June 12 meeting and Senator Ipsen seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously by voice vote.**

REPORT RELEASE: *MANAGEMENT OF STATE AGENCY PASSENGER VEHICLES*

Mr. Ned Parrish, Performance Evaluator, reviewed the findings and recommendations of the report and responded to questions from the committee.

In committee discussion, members asked about the degree to which vehicle maintenance was done in-house rather than by private vendors. Would cost savings be possible if the Transportation Department (ITD) provided maintenance services for vehicles owned by other agencies, using the facilities they had in place? Questions were raised about ITD's capacity to provide services to other agencies.

Co-chair Sweeney called upon Brad Foltman, Budget Bureau Chief, Division of Financial Management, to respond to questions about vehicle purchases and comment on the report on behalf of the Governor. Overall, he said agencies could do a better job of managing vehicles and was pleased this report had brought concerns to light. He said there were additional questions of interest, however, and it was important to look at other measures of vehicle use. He cautioned against increasing bookkeeping costs to justify saving money. In response to committee questions about the number of vehicles reviewed in the budgeting process, Mr. Foltman explained that some agencies had lump sum authority, so would not necessarily have the detail of their budgets reviewed, and agencies, at times, needed to replace vehicles during the year. He said he would look into the committee's questions and get back to the members.

Co-chair Sweeney then called upon Rick Thompson, Administrator of the Division of Internal Management Systems, to respond to the report on behalf of the Department of Administration. Mr. Thompson said that the department's response was included in the report and he had no further comments.

Co-chair Sweeney said that JFAC would probably want to know more about vehicles during the session. Representative Newcomb thanked Mr. Foltman for DFM's response and said he was pleased the legislative and executive branch could work together on the matter. The overriding purpose of the committee was to assist in improving state operations.

Senator Parry moved to accept the report. Senator Ipsen seconded the motion and it passed unanimously by voice vote.

(The committee took a 15-minute break)

REPORT RELEASE: MANAGEMENT REVIEW OF THE IDAHO COMMISSION FOR THE BLIND AND VISUALLY IMPAIRED

Ms. E. M. Akre, a management consultant engaged by the Office of Performance Evaluations to conduct this review, reviewed the findings and recommendations of the review and responded to questions from the committee.

Mr. David Ryan, Board chairman, responded to the review and committee questions. He said the board was grateful for the review and thought the conclusions and recommendations were appropriate. He reported that the board had already taken three steps: decided to hire an interim administrator while searching for a permanent administrator; enlisted the assistance of the Idaho Personnel Commission; and planned to receive training in the operation as a board. Ms. Dianne Milhollin, Board member, and Mr. Mike McGrath, Board co-chair, also provided comments and responded to committee questions.

After committee discussion, Representative Newcomb said he thought the board was in a good position to receive the findings and recommendations, as many of the members were new. Also, the agency was at a transition point. Was there anything the Legislature might do to assist the board in getting the agency on track? Mr. Ryan responded that they would review whether changes in authorizing code were needed.

Co-chair Sweeney called upon Mr. Mike Blackaller, Acting Administrator for the commission, to respond to the review. He said he agreed with the findings and recommendations regarding the most recent period at the Commission for the Blind and Visually Impaired and was anxious to move forward. Co-chair Sweeney extended the committee's thanks to Mr. Blackaller and the board members for their response to the evaluation.

Representative Geddes moved to accept the report. Senator Whitworth seconded the motion and it passed unanimously by voice vote.

UPDATE ON IMPLEMENTATION OF REPORT RECOMMENDATIONS

The Bishop's House Historic Site (July 1997)

Ms. Van Maren reported that the Idaho Historical Society hoped to have the historic site plan for the Bishop's House finalized by the end of the year. She would forward a copy of the plan to committee members as soon as it was completed. Further, the Friends of the Bishop's House and the Historical Society had agreed to a revised lease. Ratification of the lease would be on the Land Board agenda for November.

Alternatives to Incarceration: Opportunities and Costs (December 1997)

The committee reviewed a June 1998 update letter from the Department of Correction. Members discussed that the Board of Correction would provide a progress report by January 1999 on three issues JLOC outlined in a December 1997 letter. A progress report on implementation of report recommendations will be requested for review at that time.

Public School Use of Tobacco Tax Funds (January 1998)

Ned Parrish, Performance Evaluator, reported that some of the report recommendations had been partially implemented while others were still "in process." A recommendation to improve school district program coordination had been implemented in part, by allocating a base of \$1,500 to each school district. This increased funding to the smallest school districts, but, because of a decrease in overall program funding, some districts now had fewer resources for program coordination.

The department did not implement a recommendation to simplify its application and reporting form. On the other hand, the department reported that it was providing the form on diskette. Also, reporting times had shortened as districts became more familiar with the forms.

CONSIDERATION OF PROPOSED RULE REVISION

Under current committee rules, evaluated agencies review a report draft in advance, in addition to being kept informed of preliminary findings during the evaluation process. OPE then finalizes the draft and provides a final copy to the agency evaluated and the Governor to write final responses, should they choose to do so. Ms. Van Maren reported that the Governor had requested more time to review the reports and write his responses. She outlined two means by which this could be accomplished: adding a week to the current period for reviewing the final draft, or providing the Governor a preliminary draft when the agency receives a copy. The committee reviewed a draft of language to include the latter option in the committee rules.

Committee members said they thought it an important courtesy to provide sufficient review time to the Governor, when he had ultimate responsibility for the programs and operations evaluated.

Senator Parry moved to adopt the proposed amendment to committee Rule IV.1 to provide the Governor with a copy of the draft report when an agency receives it. Senator Ipsen seconded the motion and it passed unanimously by voice vote.

STATUS REPORT ON EVALUATIONS UNDERWAY

Ms. Van Maren said OPE had divided committee concerns regarding the Idaho Commission for the Blind and Visually Impaired into three issues: general performance, management, and the potential for cost efficiencies if the agency were combined with the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation. When conducting research for the management review, commission staff acknowledged general performance concerns. Furthermore, Ms. Akre had spent several hours working with board members during the closing conference, responding to their questions and expanding on the recommendations; it appeared the board was serious about addressing problems the agency had faced in recent years. Ms. Van Maren asked if JLOC still wished OPE to pursue the final two issues. **By unanimous consent, the committee suspended the final two evaluation topics, to give the new board, administrator, and new administration opportunity to address the**

problems already identified. The committee would review progress before deciding to continue with further evaluations.

Ms. Van Maren said OPE would begin evaluations of the Board of Medicine and the Board of Pharmacy and anticipated completion in the spring.

Senator Ipsen moved that JLOC meet in executive session to discuss personnel issues. Senator Parry seconded the motion and it passed unanimously by roll call vote.

At the completion of the committee's executive session, **Senator Parry moved to reconvene in regular session. Senator Ipsen seconded the motion and it passed unanimously by voice vote.**

OPE STAFFING

Staff recruitment

OPE began recruitment for new staff members in late July. This search had resulted in a number of interviews, one offer that was declined for personal reasons, and contacts with two potential future contractors. A new search was opened September 30 and interviews were to begin the week after the meeting.

Professional advisors

At the June 12 meeting, JLOC recommended that OPE investigate the possibilities of using retired professionals on assigned projects. Ms. Van Maren reported that a similar program in Arizona was most successful when the retired professionals served as expert advisors, rather than staff assistance on a project. In addition, a great deal of advance planning was needed to effectively use these advisors. Short-term engagements were reported to be most successful. Given what Arizona had learned, Ms. Van Maren spoke with three individuals whose names had been recommended. Two had expressed interest in assisting should opportunities arise. OPE would keep a file noting their areas of expertise, and enlist their assistance should a related evaluation be assigned.

Long-term staff planning

Ms. Van Maren reviewed information for the committee to consider in its long-term planning for OPE: type of work product (scope and type of evaluations); the time required to conduct the reviews; and impact of staffing on the number of evaluations and the continuity of work.

FY2000 APPROPRIATION REQUEST

Ms. Van Maren presented two options for the FY2000 appropriation request: a maintenance budget, and increasing staff by three to respond to Legislative evaluation requests and increase work continuity under turnover.

After committee discussion about the options and the anticipated state revenue shortfall, **Senator Parry moved that a maintenance budget (Option 1) move forward as the appropriation request. Senator Ipsen seconded the motion.** In discussion, committee members said that, if the need arose, the committee could request a supplemental appropriation. Furthermore, it was noted that inflation and CEC was subject to legislative determination. **The motion was passed by majority voice vote. Senator Whitworth was recorded as voting no.**

PLANNING FOR NEXT MEETING

Committee members reviewed anticipated agenda items for the next meeting and discussed when it should be held. Ms. Van Maren would be in Madagascar, under an NCSL program to provide technical assistance to members of the National Assembly and their staff, during the Legislature's organizational session and new legislator orientation program. Citing the need to meet with a full agenda and save on Legislator travel expenses, **Representative Watson moved to meet as a committee the first week of session in January. Senator Ipsen seconded the motion and it passed unanimously by voice vote.**

The meeting adjourned at 1:00 p.m.

After the meeting, Co-chair Newcomb expressed appreciation for the work that Co-chair Sweeney had provided JLOC during the committee's first five years. A small reception in honor of Senator Sweeney followed.