

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF
HOUSE APPROPRIATIONS SUBCOMMITTEE ON ELECTED OFFICIALS
MONTANA HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

February 24, 1977
8:00 a.m.
Room 428A
State Capitol Building

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Lynch with all members present except Senator Lockrem, who was excused. Executive action only at this session.

Commission on Uniform State Laws: Representative Gunderson moved to give them \$5,000 per year. VOTE: The motion carried unanimously, Senator Regan excused for the vote.

Judicial Supplemental: They need the supplemental funds to get through this year, without the raises. Whatever is not used will revert back.

Representative Gunderson moved that the Committee accept the supplemental budget request as it is. VOTE: The motion carried with four (4) aye votes and one (1) no vote (Senator Nelson).

District Court Referees: At the meeting on February 23, 1977, the committee voted to fund the referees only if S.B. 246 fails. Mr. Gosnell said that he checked out the bill further, and it does not do anything to the referees. Senator Regan reported that she had talked with several people about this, and Judge Keller told her that the referees have nothing to do with the commitment law. When there is a dispute that requires an expert judgment, then the court hires an individual under contract to settle it on the merits of the case. The committee felt it was not presented to them as this.

Senator Regan moved that the committee delete the referees from the budget. Discussion: Committed persons do not need to have their cases reviewed every 90 days, as it has been done in the past. There must be a review after the first 90 days, and only upon request after that. VOTE: The motion carried with four (4) aye votes and one (1) no vote (Representative Lynch).

Payroll Function: Senate Bill 368 was killed yesterday. Senator Regan moved to put the payroll function back in the State Auditor's Office (out of the Department of Administration), and delete \$100,000 from the appropriation. VOTE: The motion carried unanimously.

DEPARTMENT OF REVENUE: Director: The office requests \$11,000 for 1978 and \$5,000 for 1979 in legal and court fees. Chairman Lynch said that they testified they anticipate an increase in their case load because there will be additional cases coming up. Mr. Gosnell said he allowed more for them in 1978 than they actually spent in

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1976. Their request would be an add back to the \$22,000 and \$24,000 in the LFA budget recommendation, which is already higher than they are using now. The division requests to go back to the executive budget recommendation.

Representative Gunderson moved that the Committee put back in the \$16,000 for the biennium (\$11,000 in 1978 and \$5,000 in 1979). VOTE: The motion carried with four (4) aye votes and one (1) no vote (Senator Nelson).

Audit & Accounting: See attached sheet. Senator Regan moved that the committee accept the LFA recommended budget here. Discussion: Chairman Lynch asked if the bad debt collection FTE would pay for itself. Mr. Gosnell said that this could be done now anyway and he could see that this will be done anyway. VOTE: The motion carried unanimously.

Research: They want the research funding and the FTE, but could not document it. Mr. Gosnell felt they need the legal help more than the research. The division feels research is the number one priority.

Senator Regan made a motion to add to the budget the \$30,000 in for each year and the 1 FTE. Discussion: Representative Wood asked if they can't shift the funds to wherever they want and need it once they have the money; the answer was yes, they can. This is all general funds; \$15,000 more general funding per year on the research funding. VOTE: The motion carried unanimously.

Legal: Senator Nelson moved that the committee take out the \$28,676 for 1978 and \$40,992 for 1979 and fund only 10 FTEs each year. VOTE: The motion carried unanimously.

Liquor: Representative Gunderson moved that the committee give them the 1 FTE and \$15,643 and \$15,947 for 1978 and 1979, respectively. VOTE: The motion carried unanimously.

Senator Regan moved that there be no new stores granted at this time and in this budget. VOTE: The motion carried unanimously.

Representative Wood moved that \$40,000 for the biennium be added for the audit; this is liquor money that goes into the general fund. VOTE: The motion carried unanimously.

Income Tax: See the attached sheet. The \$40,517 for each year for current level budgeting request is not recommended by the LFA. Mr. Gosnell said that he funded them higher than the Governor's office based on the audit.

Senator Regan moved that the committee accept the Fiscal Analyst's recommendation of adding the \$6,600 per year for Watts and \$33,800 for 1978 and \$36,474 for 1979 for A/R. VOTE: The motion carried unanimously.

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Senator Regan moved that \$40,517 be cut from the request for both years; this is not to be granted. VOTE: The motion carried unanimously.

Corporation Tax: Representative Gunderson moved that the budget be accepted as it is in the LFA recommendation. VOTE: The motion carried unanimously.

Property Assessment: The mass appraisal funding request is a drastic reduction of what they originally requested. The current level funding is 2.4% over the 1977 base. The request for 27 additional FTEs are for the Homestead Tax Relief Act. The work is done in here rather than in the assessors' office. Chairman Lynch said that the only way it could be effectively done is on a statewide level and not in each county. Those 27 FTEs should come out of the budget after the biennium because there will be no more funding and the program will be over.

Representative Gunderson moved that \$259,488 (\$343,304 less \$83,816) for 1978 be put in and \$350,483 (\$525,590 less \$175,107) for 1979 be put in to the budget. VOTE: The motion carried with four (4) aye votes and one (1) no vote (Senator Nelson).

Representative Gunderson moved that the funding request for Mass Appraisal (\$254,814 and \$271,830), Tax Relief (\$350,000 per year), and the Escalation (\$1,248,000 for 1978 only; Zero for 1979) be put in to this budget. VOTE: The motion carried unanimously.

Miscellaneous: Representative Gunderson moved that the budget be accepted as it is on the LFA recommendation. VOTE: The motion carried unanimously.

Motor Fuels: Representative Gunderson moved that the additional funds requested for 1978 (\$25,987) and 1979 (\$23,004) be approved. VOTE: The motion carried unanimously.

Operations: Representative Gunderson moved that \$5,093 for 1978 and \$5,028 for 1979 for EEO work be approved, with no additional FTEs. VOTE: The motion carried unanimously.

Data Processing: The division is requesting 10 FTEs and fund authority. It could be done where they will bill Income Tax and Liquor for the work and FTEs.

Representative Gunderson moved that they be granted the 10 FTEs but keep the dollars where they are. VOTE: The motion carried unanimously.

Investigation: Representative Gunderson moved that the budget be accepted as it is in the LFA recommendation for both 1978 and 1979. VOTE: The motion carried unanimously.

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Inheritance: There were two FTE positions they had last biennium that they never filled; they are requesting one of those FTEs back. The \$4,000 per year request is for the classification appeals they expect to come through. Mr. Gosnell pointed out that they have already absorbed a great cut, going from 11 FTEs to 9 FTEs. Some of these funds are general fund monies and some are ERA monies.

Representative Gunderson moved that they be granted the 1 FTE and \$16,927 for 1978 and \$17,223 for 1979. VOTE: The motion carried unanimously.

The meeting adjourned at 8:55 a.m.



J.D. Lynch, Chairman

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