

MINUTES

MONTANA SENATE 53rd LEGISLATURE - REGULAR SESSION

COMMITTEE ON LEGISLATIVE ADMINISTRATION

Call to Order: By Senator Chet Blaylock, Chair, on January 6, 1993, at 2:00 p.m.

ROLL CALL

Members Present:

Sen. Chet Blaylock, Chair (D)
Sen. Mignon Waterman, Vice Chair (D)
Sen. Dorothy Eck (D)
Sen. Judy Jacobson (D)

Members Absent: Senators Crippen and Harding

Staff Present: None.

Please Note: These are summary minutes. Testimony and discussion are paraphrased and condensed.

DISCUSSION

Senator Van Valkenburg called the meeting because the legislative appropriation bill for the session is being heard in the House Appropriation Committee, tomorrow at 7 A.M. An important issue has risen since the committee last met. In a draft version of the Senate budget the Legislative Council included \$100,000 for the purchase of computers for the Senate, a proposal neither Senator Van Valkenburg nor the Secretary of the Senate requested. A discussion with staff of the Legislative Council concluded that it was not appropriate in this tight budget situation to include this large purchase in the feed bill.

The Secretary of the Senate explained that currently the Senate leases 41 computers from the Department of Administration. By a contract which extends through the 1995 session the Senate pays \$100 a month for 30 computers. The Department of Administration charges \$175 per month for the extra 11 computers. The Secretary suggested that an evaluation of costs to buy or lease computers be done. Such a study should include the option of leasing from a private vendor. In order to have the option of leasing from a private vendor for the 1995 session, the Secretary suggested including \$10,000 in the pre-session budget of this feed bill to pay lease costs for November and December of 1994. Currently the Department of Administration collects lease fees for pre-session retroactively out of the next feed bill.

Senator Blaylock asked if Clifford felt confident that she could

they are getting now? Clifford said she thinks they could get a better price if they dealt with a private vendor.

Senator Eck asked if they could get out of their lease? Claudia Clifford said she thinks so.

The committee agreed that an appropriation to buy computers was premature and agreed to including money in the pre-session budget for leasing computers from a private vendor. If this appropriation for leasing from a private vendor is not needed, the \$10,000 could revert to the general fund.

The next issue discussed focused on improvements to the Senate voting machine, specifically updating the agenda boards. Currently, the Senate is leasing its voting system from International Roll Call. The voting system has been updated and works adequately, however, the agenda boards have parts that were last manufactured in 1948 and supplies are very low. The House of Representatives purchased a new voting system a few years ago and Speaker Mercer has indicated his support for updating the Senate system, Van Valkenburg said. Clifford said analysis of continuing to lease verse purchase of a new voting system is needed. The appropriation of \$125,000 would cover the cost of a new machine.

Ms. Clifford said she introduced the whole voting system issue back before the session began and there was a point where they thought it might go into the main appropriation bill.

Senator Eck asked if they were talking about replacing just the agenda boards or the whole voting machine? Claudia Clifford answered that the current voting system they have doesn't have an agenda board but the new voting machine would incorporate that into the system. There are only two voting systems in the U. S. and the House has the other system. They could get a bid from that company. In 1989 they did get bids from both companies but they never did anything about them.

Senator Blaylock asked if there was any objection from any member of the committee that \$10,000 be included in the budget for computer start up for the next session and that they support the \$125,000 for the upgrading of the voting board and probable purchase.

Senator Eck moved the motion and Senator Waterman seconded the move. All members agreed.

ADJOURNMENT

Adjournment: 3:30 p.m.



CHET BLAYLOCK, Chair



SYLVIA KINSEY, Secretary

CB/sk