

NORTH DAKOTA LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

Minutes of the

LEGISLATIVE MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

Thursday, July 1, 1999
Harvest Room, State Capitol
Bismarck, North Dakota

Senator Rod St. Aubyn, Chairman, called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m.

Members present: Senators Rod St. Aubyn, Joel C. Heitkamp, Aaron Krauter, Gary J. Nelson, David E. Nething; Representatives Rick Berg, Merle Boucher, John Dorso, Mike Timm

Members absent: Representatives Pam Gulle-son, David Monson

Others present: See attached appendix

ADMINISTRATIVE MATTERS

Chairman St. Aubyn announced the appointment of Representative Timm as vice chairman.

The assistant director referred to the *Supplementary Rules of Operation and Procedure of the North Dakota Legislative Council*. He said the rules were revised in November 1998 and are summarized at the first meeting of each interim committee.

1999 LEGISLATIVE PROCESS QUESTIONNAIRE

At the request of Chairman St. Aubyn, the assistant director reviewed a memorandum entitled *Results of the 1999 Legislative Process Questionnaire*. After the 1999 legislative session, each legislator received a questionnaire that solicited answers to 10 questions on legislative rules and procedures--23 senators and 49 representatives returned their questionnaires. The assistant director reviewed each question and summarized the comments provided by legislators.

Comments Concerning Floor Procedures

The committee discussed the comment inquiring whether it would be possible to announce appointment of a conference committee instead of requiring approval of the body. Senator Nething said a change in the procedure to eliminate the need for a motion would be okay for the majority, but would eliminate the notice the current procedure provides to the minority. Senator Krauter agreed. The consensus was to maintain this procedure.

The committee discussed comments concerning decorum and dress by guests, i.e., students, on the floor. Senator Heitkamp said it is difficult to get kids to dress "right" if schools do not require appropriate dress. Representative Dorso said each house

requires members to dress appropriately and certainly can require guests to dress appropriately. Representative Boucher said appropriate dress can be required and it could be left to the chaperones to make sure students selected as guests are dressed appropriately. Senator Heitkamp said it is difficult to not select students just because of their style of dress.

Senator Nelson said the Legislative Council staff sends information concerning the tour guide program to schools and could include notice about the expectation of proper attire of guests on the floor. Senator Krauter said the letter should be in a positive vein.

It was moved by Representative Dorso, seconded by Representative Berg, and carried on a voice vote that the Legislative Council staff be requested to prepare a review by the committee a letter or statement to be included in the packet of tour guide materials sent to schools informing the schools of the attire required to be admitted as guests on the floor.

Senator Nelson suggested that the letter describe the decorum required for page for a day participants.

Senator Nething said it is distracting when one senator asks other senators to permit guests of that member to be on the floor with them (under Senate Rules 205 and 360 no member may have more than one guest in the morning on the floor during a session and one guest in the afternoon on the floor during a session). Representative Dorso said the House of Representatives has the same problem (under House Rules 205 and 360 a legislator may have only one guest per day on the floor). He said a major problem is the distraction caused by chairs and people moving on and off the floor. He suggested that the presiding officers could strictly enforce the one guest per day or per session rule. Representative Boucher said this issue is not one of limiting access, but is of ensuring proper decorum.

It was moved by Representative Dorso, seconded by Senator Nething, and carried on a voice vote that the Legislative Council staff be requested to prepare a proposed rules amendment to House and Senate Rules 205 and 360 to provide that guests be seated with the members at the time the session convenes, a guest can leave only when there is no debate, and no

additional guest may be seated with a member after that member's original guest leaves.

It was moved by Senator Nething, seconded by Representative Dorso, and carried on a voice vote that the Legislative Council staff be requested to prepare a proposed rules amendment to ban all guests during the periods guests currently are restricted on the floor.

Comments Concerning Various Deadlines

The committee discussed the comment that interim committee measures need a legislator sponsor, e.g., the committee chairman or, if unwilling, the vice chairman. Representative Dorso said in some instances a chairman or vice chairman may not be in favor of an interim committee recommendation. Senator Krauter said it is important that someone from the interim committee appear and testify concerning the measures recommended by interim committees. He said a named sponsor receives notice of hearings and should be responsible for testifying. Senator Nelson said the policy for the 1995 and 1997 legislative sessions was to place legislators' names on measures recommended by interim committees as a result of the argument that names of individual legislators would increase the level of support by those legislators for interim committee bills and resolutions. Under that policy, he said, interim committee chairmen were to select the names of legislators to be identified as sponsors, but in fact most chairmen requested the Legislative Council staff to contact committee members and obtain approval for placing their names on recommended bills and resolutions. He said the Legislative Council staff spent an inordinate amount of time gathering the names of committee members who were willing to be listed on interim committee measures, and many of those listed seldom testified on the measures. It was noted that committee clerks provide notice of scheduled hearings on interim committee measures to interim committee chairmen. Senator Nelson requested the Legislative Council staff to review the practice of placing individual legislators' names on interim committee bills and resolutions and requested a future agenda include discussion of this issue.

Suggestions Concerning Standing Committee Structure or Procedures

Committee members discussed suggestions to change the standing committee structure or procedures. Senator Nelson referred to the suggestion that the Appropriations Committees meet at least a week before the Legislative Assembly convenes, either after the organizational session or in early January. He said a lot of pressure would be taken off that committee if it heard complex budgets before the session convenes. He requested a future agenda include discussion regarding the Appropriations Committees meeting before the session convenes.

Senator St. Aubyn requested the Legislative Council staff to review options for additional Appropriations Committees hearings and provide this information to the committee at a future meeting.

Senator Krauter suggested that the bills for appropriations for smaller agencies could be heard early, e.g., Historical Society, Parks and Recreation Department, and Tourism Department, and thus leave more time for human services and higher education.

Representative Berg said he sees two functions of the Appropriations Committees--holding public hearings and completing the budgets. He said consideration should be given as to how the budget is presented. He said the budget should be presented and public comments received and then the committee should work to complete the budget without taking further testimony, rather than receive testimony and presentations throughout the time when the committee is working on the budget.

Suggestions Concerning Conference Committee Procedures

The committee discussed suggestions to improve conference committee procedures. Senator Nelson said the comments to limit conference committees to items of difference between the houses appear to be directed primarily to the appropriations bill for the Office of Management and Budget.

It was moved by Senator Nelson, seconded by Senator Nething, and carried on a voice vote that the Legislative Council staff be requested to prepare a proposal for an omnibus reconciliation bill that would be available to provide a vehicle for substantive issues toward the end of the session.

Senator Krauter said this vehicle should not be used to reconsider defeated proposals. Representative Boucher said the problem many members have is that no hearing is held on many of the amendments placed in the appropriations bill for the Office of Management and Budget. He said amendments to this omnibus reconciliation bill should be offered at public hearing.

Comments Concerning Staff Services

Senator Nelson referred to a comment concerning the marginal services provided by interns and committee clerks and requested that a future agenda include discussion of the future of the internship program. If the interns' function is to help committee clerks, he said, assistant clerks should be hired instead of interns.

Comments and Suggestions Concerning Legislative Process Improvements

Senator Nelson referred to the suggestion that legislators requesting similar bill drafts be put in contact with each other because similar bills are a waste of time, energy, and money. He said identical bills are used for political purposes. He requested the

Legislative Council staff to provide information on the number and types of identical and similar bills introduced during the 1999 session.

Senator Krauter referred to the comments concerning the policy against forwarding e-mail to systems outside the legislative e-mail system and the inability of some Capitol phones to complete calls to parties who have blocked calls from phones that do not show caller identification. He requested the Legislative Council staff to provide information on these issues at a future meeting.

LEGISLATIVE SESSION ARRANGEMENTS

Secretarial Services Contract

At the request of Chairman St. Aubyn, the assistant director reviewed the history of contracting for secretarial services. During the 1993 session, the Legislative Assembly employed 12.5 individuals as a joint stenographic pool; during the 1995 session the Legislative Assembly contracted with a secretarial service to provide nine employees and a supervisor at a cost of \$46,053.50; during the 1997 session the Legislative Assembly contracted with a secretarial service to provide seven employees and a supervisor at a cost of \$41,462.50; and during the 1999 legislative session the Legislative Assembly contracted with Interim Personnel to provide seven employees and a supervisor for \$614.80 a day for 71 legislative days. During each of the past three sessions, he said, the secretarial service contractor has reduced the number of employees and hours as appropriate, even though the contracts were for a base number of employees, and has billed the Legislative Assembly only for the employees and hours actually worked, rather than the per day contract price.

Chairman St. Aubyn recognized Ms. Debbie Hintz, Interim Personnel, Bismarck. Ms. Hintz said Interim Personnel began the 1999 legislative session with seven employees and one supervisor as provided in the contract. She said staff was managed according to the workload by keeping four core employees, including the supervisor, and working additional employees on a flexible schedule for a large part of the session. She said the skill testing process administered to all employees resulted in highly skilled employees, thus creating a more efficient secretarial service. She said Interim Personnel billed the Legislative Assembly for \$32,564.47, rather than for the full contract price of \$43,650.80.

Ms. Hintz said the number of completed requests included 206 speeches (1,873 copies), 228 press releases (437 copies), 37 charts (1,947 copies), 1,573 letters (13,958 copies), 1,555 faxes (4,427 copies), 273 merges (10,753 copies), 158 miscellaneous items (4,095 copies), 93 transcriptions of tapes, and transcription of 17 tapes of committee minutes totaling 77 pages and 35.25 hours.

In response to a question from Representative Dorso, Ms. Hintz said a "merge" describes when a base document is individually addressed to each individual listed on a list of names and addresses. During the last day of the session, she said, a legislator requested a merge of approximately 3,600 names and addresses which was a challenge, but was completed by adjournment.

Representative Dorso said he is concerned if the requests for transcripts of tapes were made by legislators and were not made to aid committee clerks. He said it should be clear that the secretarial service does not prepare transcripts of hearings for legislators. Representative Boucher said a transcript is appropriate if it helps to alleviate the workload of a committee clerk, but is inappropriate if it is made for other reasons. He said to request a merge of 3,600 names and addresses is inappropriate and there need to be guidelines to eliminate that kind of request.

Senator St. Aubyn requested the Legislative Council staff to propose methods of limiting these types of uses of secretarial services and include the proposals as part of the 2001 *Invitation to Bid - Legislative Assembly Secretarial Services* or a revised *Policy Regarding Secretarial Services to Legislators*, as appropriate.

Senator Krauter inquired about the transcription of 17 tapes of committee hearings. Senator Nelson said trends can be reviewed, but no one can anticipate the ability of an individual committee clerk to keep current. During the last session, he said, some difficulty was experienced in retaining committee clerks and the secretarial service provided assistance to bring the replacement clerks up to date. Representative Dorso said the interns also play a part in this, because a good intern allows the committee clerk to do more.

Bill and Journal Room Services Contract

At the request of Chairman St. Aubyn, the assistant director reviewed the history of contracting for bill and journal room services. The assistant director said a contract for bill and journal room services was first entered for the 55th Legislative Assembly (1997) and services were provided by Quality Printing Service at a total cost of \$39,160. The contract for operating the bill and journal room during the 1999 session was with Quality Printing Service for \$440 per day for 82 days--14 days before the Legislative Assembly convenes, an estimated 66 legislative days, and two business days during the February recess--and any legislative days beyond 66. The actual cost was \$38,840 (the session lasted for 71 legislative days).

Chairman St. Aubyn recognized Mr. George J. Keiser, Quality Printing Service, Bismarck. Mr. Keiser said the bill and journal room operated well under the contract. He noted legislators with computers have access to engrossed measures and versions of measures which include amendments adopted by the other

house. He said photocopies of engrossed bills were available from the bill and journal room for the first time during the 1999 session. Under the contract, he said, photocopies were available from the bill and journal room for a copying fee. He said many legislators requested photocopies of engrossed bills from the bill and journal room, and those copies were provided upon payment of the copying fee. He referred to the comments on the legislative process questionnaire by legislators who were upset with the fee and suggested the committee review this aspect of the contract. He said few people other than legislators complained about the charges for copies of engrossed bills. He suggested the bill and journal room could maintain a record of copies of engrossed bills provided to legislators and bill the Legislative Assembly for the cost of providing those copies.

Representative Dorso said he is not in favor of having the Legislative Assembly pay the contractor for providing photocopies of engrossed bills to legislators. He said a legislator with a computer can print the engrossed bill and any legislator can receive a copy of the engrossed bill from the Legislative Council office at no charge.

Senator Krauter said the problem arose when neither committee members nor the sponsor had copies of engrossed bills and the quickest way to get copies was from the bill and journal room.

Representative Berg said the problem occurs after crossover, when engrossed bills are the bills that are heard in the second house.

The director said it is inefficient to require someone to come to the Legislative Council office and request the Legislative Council staff to provide a copy of a bill. He said it would be more efficient for bill and journal room personnel to provide copies of engrossed bills as they provide copies of introduced bills.

The assistant director said some committee chairmen require their committee clerks to obtain a copy of engrossed measures being heard by their committees from the Legislative Council office, make copies, and place those copies in committee members' bill books.

Representative Dorso requested that this issue be reviewed when the invitation to bid for providing bill and journal room services is reviewed by the committee. He also requested the Legislative Council staff to revise the committee clerk job description to require committee clerks to obtain a copy of engrossed measures to be heard by their committees, place copies into committee members' bill books, and provide a copy to the bill's prime sponsor.

Senate Employee Suggestions

Chairman St. Aubyn recognized Mr. William C. Parker, Secretary of the Senate, for suggestions from Senate employees which related to policy or practices.

Mr. Parker said the number of assistant sergeants-at-arms was reduced from two to one and the number of page and bill book clerks was reduced from three to two during the 1999 legislative session. He said the reduction in staff was not noticed, primarily because of the quality of employees hired. He said there were 66 pages under the page for a day program administered by the chief page. Although these pages sometimes impeded rather than assisted the process, he said, the quality of high school students selected for the program was excellent. He predicted many from this group will be leaders in the future.

Mr. Parker said the telephone room appears to be overstaffed, but it is beneficial to have these extra personnel as workers for reassignment to other areas, as needed.

Mr. Parker said the parking lot situation was good in 1995, a disaster in 1997, and half a disaster in 1999. He said only one attendant was employed near the end of the session and this worked well. He recommended that only one parking lot attendant be employed.

Senator Heitkamp said one parking lot attendant might not be able to keep the parking lot clear on days during which it is snowing heavily and it would help if Facility Management provided snow removal assistance. Representative Dorso said Facility Management personnel use a power broom to sweep the parking lots early in the morning. Senator Heitkamp said the problem is those legislators who arrive later, after snow again covers their parking space numbers. Representative Dorso said he thinks the major problem is ensuring that parking spaces reserved for legislators are used by legislators because legislators should know where their parking spaces are. Mr. Parker noted that parking lot attendants help carry items for legislators who need assistance. Representative Dorso said one parking lot attendant involved full time in the parking lot should be sufficient to ensure proper parking by legislators, to ensure others do not park in spots reserved for legislators, and to assist those who need help.

Mr. Parker said two-day committee clerks receive \$84 per day and three-day committee clerks receive \$90 per day. He said the chief committee clerk recommended that the pay for two-day and three-day committee clerks be the same. He said it would be much easier to get two-day committee clerks to help three-day committee clerks if they were on the same pay schedule.

Mr. Parker said it may be time for two assistant Appropriations Committee clerks rather than one. He said this may be too many clerks during slow times, but that third person is needed during busy times.

Senator Nething said the problem with a third committee clerk would be space for that clerk. At times the clerks are behind, he said, but they received help from the secretarial service during the 1999

legislative session. He said the big crunch is during conference committee times and with conference committees that are booked outside the Harvest Room. He said the current flexibility in moving staff around is the solution rather than a third committee clerk.

Representative Dorso said the House Appropriations Committee started with the Appropriations Committee clerk and three assistant Appropriations Committee clerks, but after about two weeks only three clerks remained and it worked well for the rest of the session. He said this could be done in the future if the clerks are as qualified as they were in 1999. He said the main problem is scheduling rooms for conference committees.

Mr. Parker said the desk force is overwhelmed on bill introduction deadline days and a suggestion is that one to three days be allowed to place bill introductions into the journals. He said the job descriptions should be revised to delineate the specific duties of each position.

Senator Nelson said the movement has been away from specific job descriptions and titles so that people can be moved or assigned to areas as needed without objections that it is "not in my job description."

House Employee Suggestions

At the request of Chairman St. Aubyn, the assistant director summarized suggestions from House and legislative employees which related to policy or practices.

The assistant director said a suggestion was to combine the positions of calendar clerk and bill clerk. The assistant chief clerk could provide assistance to the calendar/bill clerk at busy times, e.g., bill introduction deadlines, crossover, and conference committee reports. Consolidation would be feasible after revising the computer systems to reduce duplication of entries in the bill status system and the journal system.

The assistant director said under the current systems, the bill clerk selects menu options to post floor actions in order to maintain the bill status system; and the desk reporter builds journal modules to reflect floor actions in order to prepare the daily journals. He said the reporting systems could be enhanced so that bill status actions could be taken from journal modules or the journal system. At the end of the day when the journal has been finalized, he said, the program could be run to print the journal, transfer the journal to the LAWS system, and transfer actions to the bill status system. He said this would reduce the workload of the bill clerk to that of maintaining bill introduction and bill signout records. He emphasized this change would eliminate the "real time" feature of the bill status system which is available to LAWS users and LRGO system users. Vote records would continue to be available immediately, he said, but other actions would not appear in the

systems until the journal is "run" at the end of the day--from early evening to very early in the morning.

Although the desk reporter starts preparing journal modules in the morning, he said, the modules change throughout the day, e.g., to reflect corrections in vote totals and changes in conference committee memberships, and may not be included in the final journal if that action anticipated by the desk reporter has not actually occurred during the floor session. Thus, he said, no information should be taken from the journal modules until the journal is finalized.

Representative Dorso said he reviewed with Mr. Lance Hagen, Chief Clerk of the House, use of the computer systems. He said a major suggestion is to eliminate duplication in entry work. Senator Nelson suggested that care be taken before a position is eliminated because of the impact if one employee is sick or unavailable.

It was moved by Representative Dorso, seconded by Representative Berg, and carried on a voice vote to authorize the Legislative Council staff to enhance the reporting systems so that bill status actions can be taken from the journal.

The assistant director said another suggestion is to eliminate the previous day's calendar from the daily calendar. He said this portion of the calendar requires substantial work by the calendar clerk and similar information may be able to be provided by a journal summary.

It was moved by Representative Berg, seconded by Representative Dorso, and carried on a voice vote that the previous day's calendar section be eliminated from the daily calendar and, if feasible, a journal summary be provided.

The assistant director said another suggestion is to modify the committee hearing system that governs the display on the monitors on the ground and first floors to provide a description of the measures being heard by committees. He said the committee hearing system could be revamped so that descriptions taken from committee hearing schedules could be displayed on the monitors. He said this would provide a description of bills being heard by committee and would aid persons who use the monitors. Due to display limitations and the need to provide information for committees in a relatively speedy manner, he said, only the current day's hearings should be displayed because the descriptions would appear in the area in the two columns now used to display bills being heard on the next two days. Otherwise, he said, it would require an inordinate amount of time to view descriptions of measures for three or more days of hearings of all committees. He noted that persons using the printed hearing schedules as well as those using the on-line legislative information systems have descriptions of bills and the schedules of hearings for a week at a time.

It was moved by Senator Nelson, seconded by Senator Heitkamp, and carried on a voice vote

that the Legislative Council staff be authorized to enhance the committee hearing monitor system so that descriptions can be taken from committee hearing schedules for placement on the monitors and the monitors display the current day's hearings.

The assistant director said another suggestion is to review the procedure in order to speed up the process for bill numbering and sponsor identification during deadline days. He said the Legislative Council staff is reviewing this suggestion, but the difficulty is that bill numbers cannot be added until a bill is introduced without eliminating the consecutive numbering system, and sponsors are not known until the legislator actually introduces the bill.

Representative Dorso requested the Legislative Council staff to continue to review the process and propose options to alleviate the crunch at deadline time, including the possibility of reducing the time for stapling and covering bills.

The assistant director said several suggestions were made to modify the House front desk area, especially with respect to moving the voting system computer to provide the Chief Clerk with easier access to the Speaker of the House and installing pullout shelves to allow easier access to the printers.

Senator Nelson said the architect should look at a complete, holistic approach when recommending and proposing changes to the facility. He said he is disappointed that modifications are necessary in order to obtain better access to the printers and provide easier communications between the Chief Clerk and the Speaker. Representative Timm said a problem discovered as the result of moving the Speaker's desk area back (in order to improve the line of sight to legislators on the ends of rows) was that now it is difficult to hear members because of the acoustics. It was noted that in the Senate chamber the Secretary of the Senate constantly changes the audio system volume settings for each speaker and during debate so that an even volume is maintained regardless of the speaker and how the speaker holds the microphone.

Representative Dorso said nothing prevents future work to further improve the facility. If the changes are simple, he said, they should be done. The assistant director noted that last interim the committee also considered replacing the sound system in each chamber, resurfacing the desks in the chambers, and enhancing the voting system by upgrading computer hardware and software. Representative Boucher said we need to look at the major problems. He agreed the sound system needs to be replaced.

It was moved by Representative Dorso, seconded by Representative Boucher, and carried on a voice vote that the Legislative Council staff be requested to provide information to the committee on replacement of the sound system, enhancement of the voting system, renovation of

the front desk area as suggested by front desk employees, resurfacing of the legislators' desks, and other renovations of the chambers. Representative Dorso emphasized that a holistic approach should be taken and any changes should be viewed from all perspectives.

Telephone Room

At the request of Chairman St. Aubyn, the assistant director reviewed the operation of the telephone room. The assistant director said 62,320 calls were received in 1993; 41,668 calls were received in 1995; 28,433 calls were received in 1997; and 22,491 calls were received in 1999 (5,106 in January, 8,813 in February, 6,594 in March, and 1,978 in April). He said 1999 was the first session in which voice mail was used and the statistics include 1,302 voice mail messages in February, 521 voice mail messages in March, and 67 voice mail messages in April. He said the telephone room has been staffed with eight attendants, two pages, and one supervisor since 1995 (in 1993 there were seven attendants). He said the committee may want to consider reducing the number of attendants from eight to six. Senator Heitkamp said he believes the number of telephone calls will continue to go down because of the ever-increasing use of e-mail to contact legislators.

Representative Dorso requested the Legislative Council staff to prepare an invitation to bid for telephone room services to be provided by a private contractor. Senator St. Aubyn said his concern with privatizing the telephone room would be the resulting lack of flexibility in assigning telephone room attendants to other areas of need on a case-by-case basis.

LEGISLATIVE INFORMATION SERVICES On-Line Bill Status System

Chairman St. Aubyn recognized Mr. Marty Hoag, North Dakota State University, for a review of on-line bill status information provided to the public and state agencies during the 1999 legislative session. Mr. Hoag distributed a prepared statement, a copy of which is on file in the Legislative Council office.

Mr. Hoag reviewed the background of the partnership of the Legislative Council, Information Services Division, and the North Dakota University System to provide on-line bill status information during the 1999 legislative session. He said one objective of the partnership was to provide a single point of contact for specific users. He said the University System handled service requests and technical support for the general public and the University System, and the Information Services Division handled the remaining state agencies. He said this worked well and allowed the Legislative Council staff to focus on legislative needs. During the 1999 legislative session, he said, three different services were offered to the public and state agencies:

1. Legislative Council web pages, which required no subscription. The Legislative Council includes bill text and status, subject index, bill and journal text, committee hearing schedules, and daily calendars on the Legislative Branch web site <http://www.state.nd.us/lr>. The University System provides technical (help desk) support to the public.
2. The legislative bill tracking system (LBTS), which is available free to state agencies and for a subscription starting at \$300 to the public. The University System developed and operates this system. The tracking service allows subscribers to track specific sets of bills throughout the session.
3. The bill status information system (LRGO), which provides information available from the Legislative Council web pages on a "real time" basis, and which is available free to state agencies through the Information Services Division and to the public for a \$300 subscription fee. He said about 50 state agencies were set up to access this system and there were two subscribers from outside state government.

Mr. Hoag said during the first two weeks of the session most reported problems were typical user access and configuration problems, which were quickly corrected. He said the legislative bill tracking system was first developed during the 1997 session and the Information Services Division and the University System contributed directly toward costs for software, hardware, development, and operations. Of the 374 user accounts, he said, 315 were from state agencies and 59 from the general public. At the start of the session, he said, over 500 log-ins per day were tracked on the tracking system and at the end of the session 164 log-ins per day were recorded. He said the University System help desk reported an average 8 to 10 calls per week concerning the on-line legislative information systems. Most of these calls were fairly basic problems and easy to solve over the phone. Some of the calls, he said, were on legislative questions and those were referred to the toll-free 1-888-NDLEGIS line for contacting the legislative telephone room.

Mr. Hoag said the tracking system users were surveyed and 111 responses were received indicating overall satisfaction with the service. Eighty-two percent agreed or strongly agreed that they would subscribe again and only 6.3 percent agreed or strongly agreed that the price was too high. Dozens of specific suggestions for future improvements were received, he said, and many responses included specific screen format and navigational changes. Other common requests, he said, were for more frequent information updates, especially near the end of the session, the ability to search for bills based on

any text in the bill, and budget status information (which is now provided only through the LRGO system). He said he looks forward to continuing to enhance and refine the systems in the future. Senator Nelson said he did not hear of any problems during the 1999 legislative session.

It was moved by Senator Nelson, seconded by Senator Krauter, and carried on a voice vote that the committee affirm continuation of the arrangement whereby the University System provides bill status information to entities outside the legislative branch.

LEGISLATIVE RULES

At the request of Chairman St. Aubyn, the assistant director referred to proposed legislative rules amendments and a memorandum entitled *House and Senate Rule Differences*. He said the proposed amendments resulted from comments, questions, and suggestions documented by the Legislative Council staff during the session. He said the materials were placed in three-ring binders for ease in maintaining a set of the proposed amendments. If the binders are left with the Legislative Council staff, he said, they would be updated before each meeting to include new or revised rules amendments. Chairman St. Aubyn said there is not enough time to review the memorandum or proposed rules amendments at this meeting, but they would be reviewed at future meetings as time permits.

USE OF LEGISLATIVE CHAMBERS

The assistant director reviewed a request from the North Dakota Intercollegiate State Legislature for use of the House and Senate chambers October 22-24, 1999. He said the committee previously has approved the use of the chambers by the Intercollegiate State Legislature.

It was moved by Senator Nething, seconded by Representative Boucher, and carried on a voice vote that the committee approve the request of the North Dakota Intercollegiate State Legislature for use of the Senate and House chambers October 22-24, 1999.

ADMINISTRATIVE MATTERS

The assistant director reviewed two letters sent to legislators with computers, requesting legislators who use local connections to obtain access to the Capitol to disconnect after usage is completed and requesting legislators who use WATS line connections to disconnect after replication is completed. He said the letters were sent to remind legislators of the need to disconnect lines in order to make local lines available to others or to reduce long-distance charges. Committee members suggested that the Legislative Council staff implement automatic disconnection after a period of inactivity or some other process to allow others access and keep costs down.

No further business appearing, Chairman St. Aubyn adjourned the meeting at 12:20 p.m.

Jay E. Buringrud
Assistant Director

John D. Olsrud
Director

ATTACH:1