



SEN. EMILY ANN CAIN, SENATE CHAIR  
REP. CHUCK KRUGER, HOUSE CHAIR

MEMBERS:

SEN. ROGER KATZ  
SEN. DAVID C. BURNS  
SEN. MARGARET M. CRAVEN  
SEN. CHRISTOPHER K. JOHNSON  
SEN. EDWARD M. YOUNGBLOOD  
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REP. ANDREA M. BOLAND  
REP. H. DAVID COTTA  
REP. LANCE E. HARVELL  
REP. JEFF M. MCCABE

MAINE STATE LEGISLATURE  
GOVERNMENT OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE

**MEETING SUMMARY**

**July 25, 2013**

**Accepted September 19, 2013**

**CALL TO ORDER**

The Chair, Sen. Cain, called the Government Oversight Committee to order at 9:05 a.m. in the Cross Office Building.

**ATTENDANCE**

Senators:	Sen. Cain, Sen. Katz, Sen. Craven, Sen. Johnson, and Sen. Youngblood Joining the meeting in progress: Sen. Burns
Representatives:	Rep. Kruger, Rep. Davis, and Rep. Cotta Joining the meeting in progress: Rep. McCabe Absent: Rep. Boland and Rep. Harvell
Legislative Officers and Staff:	Beth Ashcroft, Director of OPEGA Kristen McAuley, Senior Analyst, OPEGA Matthew Kruk, Analyst, OPEGA Etta Connors, Adm. Secretary, OPEGA
Others Providing Information to the Committee:	John Gallagher, Director, MaineHousing Peter Anastos, Chair, MaineHousing Board of Commissioners

**INTRODUCTION OF GOVERNMENT OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE MEMBERS**

The members of the Government Oversight Committee introduced themselves for the benefit of the listening audience.

**• Request for OPEGA Review of Certain Matters at the Department of Environmental Protection**

Chair Cain moved to take Sen. Johnson's request for an OPEGA review of certain matters at the Department of Environmental Protection out of order. She said Sen. Johnson asked that this item be taken off today's Agenda for the purpose of gathering more information. The request will be taken up at a future GOC meeting.

## SUMMARY OF THE JUNE 14, 2013 GOC MEETING

The Meeting Summary of June 14, 2013 was accepted as written.

### NEW BUSINESS

- **Presentation of Final Report on Maine State Housing Authority's LIHEAP and WAP Programs**

Director Ashcroft presented OPEGA's Report on Maine State Housing Authority's Low Income Home Energy Assistance and Weatherization Assistance Programs. She thanked OPEGA analysts Kristen McAuley, Matthew Kruk and Maura Pillsbury for their work on this review and the management and staff at MaineHousing who have been very cooperative in their responses to OPEGA's requests.

Sen. Katz understood that MaineHousing contracts with local CAP agencies to administer the funds, and asked if there was any analysis done on the administrative costs that the CAP agencies incur and if there were discussions of the reasonableness of those charges. Director Ashcroft said OPEGA attempted to do that for LIHEAP and learned that under the federal grant MaineHousing is only allowed to use 10% of the grant award for administration. Those administrative funds are eligible to be used for administration of anything that is funded by LIHEAP, including not only the LIHEAP fuel assistance benefit programs, but also to administer the Weatherization Program and any other special programs that are funded by LIHEAP. The CAAs are administering more programs than just the fuel assistance that are funded by LIHEAP.

CAAs report what the administrative funds are being used for on a regular basis to MaineHousing. OPEGA reviewed those reports and the categories listed were reasonable. MaineHousing allocates 6.5% out of the 10% to the CAAs and retains 3.5% for itself. What is reported to MaineHousing is the use of administrative funds that were allocated from the LIHEAP grant. It was noted that, in some instances, the CAAs are using other funds they have, in addition to the LIHEAP funds, toward administration of some programs. Depending on how large the federal grant is in any one year, and how much is available for administration, there are years when some CAAs are subsidizing the administration. Because of that OPEGA felt it would be a hardship to ask the CAAs to provide all administrative costs they had relating to LIHEAP. OPEGA concluded that they were using the funds they were given for appropriate purposes and sometimes were subsidizing it.

Chair Cain asked if OPEGA had reviewed the report MaineHousing received from the independent audit on their Energy Conservation Online System (ECOS). Director Ashcroft said OPEGA has reviewed the report and the overall conclusion was that the System did appear to provide the functionality MaineHousing was looking for going forward. They found the costs to be reasonable, but did have concerns, recommendations, and suggestions about MaineHousing's ability to maintain the System. Director Ashcroft would defer to MaineHousing to speak further on that report.

#### **Recommendation 1 – MaineHousing Should Strengthen LIHEAP Controls to Minimize Potential for Abuse**

Sen. Burns asked how OPEGA came up with the samplings for review. Director Ashcroft said OPEGA took data on all LIHEAP recipients for the 5 year period 2008 – 2012. MaineHousing provided a data file from the computer systems they use for LIHEAP fuel assistance management. OPEGA analyzed all of those records looking for, for example, social security numbers showing up multiple times that might indicate people were either claiming the same individual in multiple households, or there had been a duplicate benefit paid; or matching addresses where the social security numbers might be different, but there was a benefit paid to the same household. Director Ashcroft said that might happen as people move in and out of households, but it was a potential flag that perhaps two people from the same household had claimed a benefit. OPEGA also looked at the process in general in terms of what steps were in place to verify what people were self-reporting

for income. Most of the information used to determine eligibility, and the level of benefit, is information that is provided by the applicant. OPEGA looked for how often that information was verified against third-party sources. In some cases, for certain kinds of income like social security or disability income, MaineHousing does contact other state agencies to confirm what the applicant reported, but there are not a lot of other checks to make sure that someone is not under reporting their income.

Director Ashcroft said OPEGA felt that overall their data analysis showed that the controls that were supposed to be in the system itself may not be functioning as intended, such as preventive duplicate social security numbers from being entered. She said that was MaineHousing's only control in the system. In addition, there is no system check for duplicate addresses or third party verification of key information.

**Recommendation 2 – MaineHousing Should Strengthen Procurement Guidance and Oversight in the WAP Program to Ensure Quality Goods and Services are Consistently Obtained at the Best Price**

Sen. Youngblood asked if an agency's experience with a contractor in one year, i.e. how they were required to go back to do rework, was factored in to evaluating their Bid in the next year. Director Ashcroft said OPEGA found there was some confusion among some CAAs as to what degree they could take past experience into account. That is one of the reasons OPEGA suggested that the process be more standardized, and clear criteria related to past performance be built into that selection process, in addition to cost, etc.

**Recommendation 3 – MaineHousing Should Establish Performance Benchmarks and Utilize New Data System ECOS for Improving Management and Performance Monitoring of the WAP Program**

Chair Kruger asked if the GOC, in 6 months to a year, could receive a report back on the performance of ECOS and whether it is giving the kind of data going forward that will be helpful. Director Ashcroft said that will be included in OPEGA's follow-up work.

**Recommendation 4 – MaineHousing Should Continue to Improve Its Oversight and Support of WAP Sub-grantees**

The GOC had no comments or questions regarding Recommendation 4.

The GOC thanked OPEGA for their work on the Report and the quality of work generally done by OPEGA staff.

Chair Cain offered MaineHousing representatives an opportunity to address the GOC.

Mr. Anastos said he believes MaineHousing has come a long ways over the past year. The MaineHousing Board also had concerns regarding ECOS and, after having the independent review of the System, did not think the situation was as bad as originally thought. He wanted to thank the GOC for their help in reviewing MaineHousing.

Director Gallagher reiterated what Director Ashcroft said earlier – this review was an evaluation of a program not an investigation. MaineHousing was pleased with the results of the review. OPEGA noted 1,478 “anomalies” out of 620,297 records. That is a very small percentage but MaineHousing needs to address those anomalies and plans to do so.

Director Gallagher made the following points:

- As MaineHousing moves forward they will have to look at the cost benefit of how much it will cost to get to the extra .2% of the “anomalies”.

- MaineHousing has a very independent group of CAAs who have been doing things a certain way for a long time and does not appreciate MaineHousing dictating how they will do business. It is always a struggle to try to get both the state and federal mandates and recommendations to be heard down to that level. As MaineHousing moves forward to implement the changes, Committee members, as legislators, need to be prepared and patient with the phone calls they will receive from the CAAs regarding how much work and paperwork MaineHousing is requiring them to do.

Director Gallagher said CAAs work with the clients not just in LIHEAP, but across other programs, so the information provided by the client may have also been provided for other programs and CAAs not requesting more information may be understandable.

Chair Cain asked in what ways MaineHousing will involve the CAAs in developing what the standards and procedures will be, noting the CAAs may be able to help to make sure they are successful. Director Gallagher said the CAAs are involved every year. MaineHousing meets with them annually to figure out what their funding levels are going to be and how best to distribute them. Also, any time MaineHousing goes through a rule making change, CAAs and their representatives are involved.

Director Gallagher thinks MaineHousing is doing a good job, and will continue to do a better job, but they need to be cost effective and get the program and product out as quickly as they can to the residents they try to serve.

Chair Kruger asked Director Gallagher with what he knows, and the data he has seen, would he agree with the statement that the Weatherization Program has successfully served to reduce the amount of heating energy needed for clients' homes. The Director thinks it definitely has helped for those limited amount of individuals they have been able to help.

Rep. Cotta believes MaineHousing is doing a great job, but every time resources are misappropriated through error, deliberate abuse, or fraudulent means, it denies somebody else a benefit. He asked what Director Gallagher would foresee doing in-house to be able to accelerate the process to verify multiple beneficiaries by social security numbers, multiple people living in different homes, etc. Mr. Gallagher said ECOS is an ongoing process and MaineHousing has quit a bit invested in the System. One of the reasons he brought up the CAAs is because they don't like ECOS. They think it takes a lot more time on their part and is an extensive program. He said he is not a data person or IT person, but thinks there are filters that can be put in place to separate out the data to make comparisons. He said MaineHousing had looked at some of the instances OPEGA had identified as duplicate social security numbers, and found in many of those cases the beneficiary actually had two separate applications in the System – one for emergency repairs and one for LIHEAP. MaineHousing continues to look at that and is trying to figure out how to eliminate those anomalies. He believes it is more of a filter issue and if they could pull down a report that shows at a certain address 3 people are listed, MaineHousing would then have to make a determination and work with the agency to determine why that is happening.

Sen. Johnson noted that Mr. Gallagher mentioned cost effective measures several times and asked if at some future time when MaineHousing reports back to the GOC on their follow-up on the recommendations, they could provide information on what things they identified as cost effective and not. He thinks that should be on the record going forward. Director Gallagher said MaineHousing will do their best to bring that information back to the GOC. MaineHousing will have a good view of how the implementations are working and what improvements are needed over the next year. Some of the items tend to get expensive, especially in the computer area because you have to pay specialized individuals to tweak an existing program. But, they will look at it and what the actually cost savings are, or how that step may be helpful to make sure that somebody else gets the benefits they deserve rather than to lose it to fraud or mismanagement. Sen. Johnson commented that he would not want to see someone not get heat because MaineHousing is spending so much money on implementing a control that is not paying back what it is costing and more money is being spent on administration.

The Committee thanked Director Gallagher and Mr. Anastos for the information they provided.

Director Ashcroft said OPEGA told MaineHousing that they recognize there is a cost benefit to various potential controls and that it needs to be looked at as a system of control. It does not mean that you have to implement every control, but it is a matter of which ones to put in place that will get the greatest coverage possible knowing that you will not be at 100%. In this case, MaineHousing is choosing to implement some detective controls by running the queries on the data after the fact. It does not get all the weaknesses, but it gets some, and in general, detective controls are less expensive to implement than preventive controls. MaineHousing has an Internal Audit Director on staff who understands this and can help figure out what is the overall most cost effective system of controls. OPEGA was not looking for MaineHousing to implement everything they or OPEGA can think of, but to have a package of things that would be effective in preventing abuse.

• **Review of Criteria Selected for OPEGA Categorization of Tax Expenditure Programs**

Director Ashcroft said OPEGA was charged with providing some assistance to the Legislature in designing a process and approach for ongoing legislative review of tax expenditure programs. Chair Cain noted that it was also connected to the \$40 million in the budget related to savings from tax expenditure programs.

Director Ashcroft reviewed the “Buckets” OPEGA had developed for categorizing the existing programs:

- Target Population (i.e., non-profits, individuals, businesses)
- Number of Taxpayers Affected (by range)
- Estimated Annual General Fund Revenue Loss (by range)
- Expenditures Type (i.e., credit, deduction)
- Tax Type (income, sales, property)
- Tax Policy Principle (i.e., incentive, pyramiding, conformity)
- Data Source Used to Calculate Revenue Loss
- General Goal(s)

Director Ashcroft said OPEGA’s first step is to look at the different categories the current existing slate of over 200 tax expenditure programs fall into. She said it would be helpful to hear if Committee members had any additional categories they thought it might be helpful to include.

OPEGA is currently using what can be gleaned from MRS’ Taxes Expenditure Report (the Red Book) and the statutes authorizing the various programs to help place programs in these various categories. Some categories for some programs cannot be determined so additional conversations will be needed and Director Ashcroft asked Committee members if they had any thoughts about who the conversations should be with.

Chair Cain asked if Director Ashcroft could email Committee members the language in the budget regarding tax expenditures and the electronic link to the Red Book because tax expenditures are going to be an ongoing conversation, not just for the GOC, but also the Taxation, AFA and LCRED Committees.

Chair Cain said regarding the category “General Goal(s)” one of the challenges that the Legislature has been trying to get at for a number of years is that although all the programs were put in with good intentions, there is little language around measuring, in a stated number of years, whether the intent for a program was actually met. She thinks that is one of the biggest evaluation challenges because so many times there was a great discussion in the Committee when deciding whether the program should be created, but it is not reflected in the statute, or in an official record, that the program was intended to create jobs in “x” place or “x” industry and it will be measured in 5 years. Chair Cain realizes that may not be something that can necessarily be categorized, but might be worth looking at.

Director Ashcroft said the General Goal(s) category is at this point not going to get to what specific goals might be but more of a yes or no on whether there is anything in place that might be a measureable type goal or objective. OPEGA is also looking to be able to divide the programs by what the targeted population is, who is suppose to be benefiting from each tax credit or incentive; and the number of tax payers affected; and the estimated annual General Fund revenue loss by range and the expenditure type – is it a credit or a deduction. Tax policy principle refers to the general principle behind the program, i.e. is it intended to be an incentive or trying to conform with the federal tax code, avoid double taxation, etc.

The data source category is about what data is being used to calculate the revenue loss. In some cases it is actually numbers coming from tax returns and in other cases it is an estimation that MRS is making based on some economic model.

Sen. Youngblood thought it would be important to know the economic area or county being impacted by existing programs, particularly as future legislation is drafted. A particular program might be working well in one area but not another, so the legislation might want to be directed to specific areas. Chair Cain noted that some programs are intended to have a statewide impact and other programs are intended to have an impact in a certain place and thought that would be an interesting distinction to look at.

Chair Kruger thought separating by counties was a bad way to divide the State, especially for analyzing demographic and economic data. Director Ashcroft didn't know if the information was available to do that categorization because OPEGA may not have data about where the tax payers are that are being affected, but could probably determine if the program was supposed to have a statewide impact or be localized, or affect rural versus urban areas, etc.

Sen. Craven gave the example of the Pine Tree Zones which created a lot of jobs in the Lewiston/Auburn area, is a statewide program, but may not have produced the jobs statewide as they had in certain places. It would be destructive to end a program where one area would lose a lot. Chair Cain noted that the Pine Tree Zone Program did not start out as statewide. It originally targeted certain geographic areas and then was expanded statewide. Director Ashcroft asked if it was statewide or whether certain zones had to be established. If so, she would categorize that as local even though it has spread statewide - it is local in a lot of places and defined to the local municipality.

Chair Cain said in the last two years the Legislature implemented, and then amended to expand, the new market tax credit which is based on a federal model that has an increased level of accountability and reporting than other programs do. They have to report about job creation and specific economic results and may be one to look at that has existed at the federal level successfully and brought to Maine on a State level version in the last legislative session.

Sen. Johnson noted that an interesting presentation was done by Professor Colgan of classifications of rural, coastal and other factors of overlapping influences on the nature of the economy in parts of the State. He did not know if there was a way to overlay that information as it may be useful in trying to understand the success or value of a program.

Sen. Craven said many of the tax break programs are very old and that the age of a program would matter. She would look at the longevity of a program because everybody's forgotten why they were originally created. Chair Cain agreed and said it would be interesting to look at what the economy looks like now compared to then, and even if the amount of total tax expenditure was not changed, refocus them on what the economy is now.

Sen. Burns was amazed that all these programs do not have measurable goals and said new programs should not be created without concrete goals and somebody accountable that the intended goals are reached. Chair Cain agreed.

Director Ashcroft said OPEGA cannot fill in some of the buckets for some of the programs as the answer is not in statute or the MRS report. In other instances what is seen in the MRS report is not matching up with what is in statute. OPEGA can contact MRS to find out how they arrived at what is in the report, but there may be some instances where the information is not available. She asked if the GOC had any thoughts on who OPEGA should be reaching out to for information, or whether those gaps should be left for the Task Force to consider. Chair Cain said the OFPR staff and other individuals who used to work in OFPR, and now are in other agencies, are very familiar with the tax programs and might be good resources for information. It would be interesting, once those holes are identified, to see if there was a theme that developed.

Director Ashcroft asked if part of the Task Force's charge was to bring forth legislation that might be needed on any of the tax incentive programs. Chair Cain said they would have to in order to meet their savings. To implement \$40 million in changes, there will have to be legislation. Director Ashcroft said if OPEGA did not see it expressed in statute, somebody has to decide whether there is going to be legislation introduced to add language and asked if it was something for the Task Force, or to be done as part of OPEGA's Special Project. Should OPEGA be marking it for the GOC's review first? Chair Cain thought flagging those items for the GOC was a good idea and thinks that conversation will evolve between the GOC, the Task Force, and Taxation and AFA Committees about where that responsibility lies. Flagging it in a consistent way would give the GOC the opportunity to follow-up to make sure that action can be taken.

There was discussion of how much support OPEGA would be providing to the Task Force. Director Ashcroft said, if the GOC was comfortable with the process, she will keep the Committee informed of OPEGA's work and make the judgment calls on what work OPEGA could commit to. If it looks like the work is going to be resource intensive and affect OPEGA's work plan, she will inform the Committee. Chair Cain said the membership of the Task Force should be known in the next couple of weeks, and once that is established, the GOC should revisit this item at its next meeting to make sure they are staying on top of it, especially from an OPEGA staff resource allocation.

## **UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

### **• GOC Consideration of Open Recommendations From OPEGA Prior Report On:**

#### **- Children's Mental Health**

Sen. Craven thanked Melissa Tremblay, Director of Clinical Services, Tri-County Mental Health Services, for her outreach to other providers and the information she provided regarding children's mental health.

Sen. Craven summarized some of the concerns she was aware of. About 20% of all children in Maine have mental health needs and those living in rural areas get 20% less services than those in urban areas because they don't have the same health care access. Sometimes there are kids languishing in emergency room corridors for up to 2 weeks. It has been determined that the child needs hospitalization, mostly in a mental health setting, but nothing is available so MaineCare, or whoever the insurer is, is paying for that child to be in the emergency room for up to 2 weeks where the child may not be receiving the proper treatment.

Sen. Craven said respite services are a big problem for families with children with mental health needs or with behavioral issues. One problem that happened was that an RFP for respite services and the contract was awarded to NAMI, but they had no resources to deliver the service on the ground so families were left without the services needed. Issues that need to be looked at is whether the bidder who has been awarded a contract has enough resources to actually deliver the services. Although she has the highest regard for NAMI, she does not know why they were awarded the RFP.

Sen. Craven said 3-4 years ago the reimbursement for clinicians in the community was reduced so a lot of them joined the hospital and went under their umbrella. It is now costing the State more for less service, and it is not the same as having clinicians in the community for families with needs.

Sen. Craven highlighted the information gathered by Director Tremblay:

- With the implementation of a managed care system, APS, duration of care and eligibility for services has been dramatically reduced for children and families requiring case management services.
- The abrupt transitions are disruptive and often result in increased risk of crisis.
- Case Management is a vital support for children and families and at this time there is no option for families with no MaineCare coverage due to non-existent grant dollars for this service.
- Access to higher levels of care (such as MST, Multisystemic Therapy, as an example) are disallowed if a lower level of care has not been tried and “failed”.
- The services preferred, and readily approved by APS, are often unrealistic on the service delivery side. There is a statewide shortage of child psychiatrists.
- Crisis care and acute care resources such as intensive residential treatment, respite and hospital beds are in high demand but largely inaccessible.
- Transportation has been a real challenge for children and families as well. This happened because of federal requirements that DHHS engage a broker for transportation services. It is now very disorganized because the brokers don't have their feet on the ground yet and the traditional providers who went through the local agencies have lost their volunteer services and other transportation initiatives of not being able to bill in the traditional way.

Sen. Craven, Chair of the Health and Human Services Committee, said that Committee has DHHS scheduled to report back to them in September, requesting that they meet with the broker and other agencies statewide who were responsible for providing transportation services in the past.

Chair Kruger asked for the definition of “broker” in regard to the area of health and human services and do they take money for services that are in the general funding for services. Sen. Craven said the Center for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) will only reimburse for medically necessary transportation. In the past, people were able to work with their local transportation agencies and were able to pay a small fee to run small errands. CMS required the Department to hire a broker. The broker is just an agency, they do not provide the service, but manage the dollars coming into the State for the payment of transportation costs to agencies on the ground who provided the service. Transportation providers are not reimbursed once the person(s) they transport are not in the vehicle.

Sen. Burns asked what recommendations in OPEGA's report remained open. Director Ashcroft said from OPEGA's report on Children's Mental Health Services everything was still open except Recommendation 4 – CDS Should Improve Monitoring of Staff Resources Used in Developing Service.

Regarding Recommendation 2 – Greater Emphasis Needed on the Responsible Stewardship of Resources in the Delivery of Appropriate, Quality Services, Sen. Craven said there are issues with the outpatient provider network in a number of different ways. She is not sure how that was going to work or who was going to get tasked with it. OPEGA thought the Department, at the time, should have something in place to be able to tell the HHS Committee how they reduced the clinicians rates, the number of clinicians in the community and the number affiliated with hospitals, etc. so that the Legislature would have an ongoing view. This recommendation was

from an administrative standpoint, but it appears there is also some rules as to what they will pay for and not pay for and are complicating scenarios for the treatment for people.

Sen. Burns said DHHS and the HHS Committee need to address the lack of respite care.

Chair Cain noted that another layer is that mental health needs intersect with medical needs and there is a huge problem where those two sides are related and cannot be separated, yet from a departmental perspective and policy perspective, they are often treated separately. There is no facility in Maine for children qualified to deal with high level medical needs coupled with high level mental health needs. Children are placed in adult facilities or sent out of state, and layered with that, as stated by Sen. Craven, you have to try and fail at the lower level of services even when medical professionals are saying that is not appropriate care for that child. Our policies say the child has to go and fail there first. That can disrupt medical care and treatment, and does nothing to help the security of a family.

Chair Cain agreed with Sen. Burns that this should be put on a future agenda for DHHS to talk about and hopefully the GOC can identify what relates to the GOC's work and also what is more appropriate for the HHS Committee.

Director Ashcroft referred to Recommendation 3 – MDOE Should Adjust CDS Budget Processes and More Actively Monitor CDS Program Finances and said that it was noticed during the review that the Children's Mental Health Oversight Committee, at that time, had stopped meeting and was no longer receiving reports or making reports to the joint standing committees of the Legislature. There were a lack of appointments being made to the Committee and it had ceased to function. There were also a number of specific duties assigned in statute to that Committee, some of which appeared to be no longer relevant. OPEGA's recommendation was that if the Committee is no longer useful, remove it from the statute, but there were a number of people who testified at the public comment period on OPEGA's Report that they could see lots of ways the Committee could be useful if re-engaged and reassigned different duties.

The GOC asked for an update on the Children's Mental Health Oversight Committee at its next meeting. Sen. Burns also wanted to know how many beds there are for juveniles in the State. Director Ashcroft will ask DHHS if they have that information. Sen. Craven asked that the Director also ask how many children are sent out of State for services while they are waiting for a bed.

## **REPORT FROM OPEGA DIRECTOR**

### **• Status of Projects In Progress**

Director Ashcroft gave a status update of projects in progress.

The **Healthy Maine Partnership Contracts and Funding** is in progress.

**Maine Economic Improvement Fund** has begun.

There has been a delay in the **Office of Information Technology** in that OPEGA put out an RFP for a consultant and did not receive satisfactory responses. The next step is to figure out why and then to rebid for some technical expertise.

OPEGA is in the report phase of the **Public Utilities Commission** review and expects to release the Report at the next GOC meeting.

**Special Project: Tax Expenditure Programs** was discussed earlier.

OPEGA is still providing technical assistance in the **Special Project: Technical Assistance for Education Committee Contracted Study of Education Funding**. Sen. Burns asked the status of the School Funding Review Contract. Director Ashcroft said the independent consultant is doing the review and due to deliver the final report to the Education Committee in December. They gave an interim report in April to the Education Committee and also at that time discussed with the Committee what the next phase of their review was going to include. Currently the Consultant has been holding stakeholder meetings with superintendents, principals, and teachers around the State to get their input. Sen. Burns asked for a copy of the Consultant's first report to the Education Committee. Director Ashcroft will send the members a link to the Report.

Sen. Johnson, a member of the Education Committee, had just received information that the Education Committee will be meeting shortly and the consultant, Picus, will be attending. Director Ashcroft will gather the requested information and will also forward the date of when the Education Committee is meeting to GOC members.

### **NEXT GOC MEETING DATE**

The next Government Oversight Committee is scheduled for Thursday, September 12, 2013 at 9:00 a.m.

### **REMARKS**

Sen. Youngblood recognized Dwight Hines, Ph.D, a citizen who regularly attends GOC meetings. Sen. Youngblood and other members of the Committee thanked Dr. Hines for his comments regarding the GOC contained in his June 5, 2013 letter (copies provided to GOC at the June 14<sup>th</sup> meeting and on file in OPEGA) to Barry Matulaitis, Editor, Livermore Falls Advertiser.

### **ADJOURNMENT**

The Government Oversight Committee meeting was adjourned at 11:23 a.m.