

Government Oversight Committee
(Joint Legislative Committee on Program Evaluation
and Government Accountability)

Meeting Summary
April 11, 2005

CALL TO ORDER

The Co-chair, Representative Dugay, called the meeting to order at approximately 4:10 p.m. in the Labor Committee Room.

ROLL CALL

Senators: Sen. Courtney, Sen. Dow, Sen. Raye, Sen. Mitchell
Absent: Sen. Gagnon, Sen. Perry

Representatives: Rep. Dugay, Rep. Canavan, Rep. Collins, Rep. Crosthwaite, Rep. O'Brien
Absent: (Rep. Trahan joined the meeting in progress)

Legislative Officers and Staff: Beth Ashcroft, Director, Office of Program Evaluation and Government Accountability
Lorna Pelkey, Administrative Secretary, Office of Program Evaluation and Government Accountability

SUMMARY OF March 28th MEETING

The Committee did not request any changes.

REPORT FROM OPEGA DIRECTOR

Director Ashcroft briefed the Committee on the status of the office start up activities. She introduced the newly-hired Administrative Secretary, Lorna Pelkey, to the group. Ms. Ashcroft reported that she had finished the interviews for the Principal Analyst position and would be checking references this week. She hopes to make an offer shortly.

In regards to office space, Director Ashcroft told the Committee that she and Ms. Pelkey had moved into the office space in Room 107 in the Cross Building last week.

The Director informed the Committee she would be traveling to Washington, D.C. Wednesday, April 13th, for a NLPES meeting. This is a good opportunity to meet her peers from other states. She also indicated she gave a brief overview of OPEGA in a presentation on April 11th to the Joint Standing Committee on State and Local government.

Rep. Crosthwaite informed the Committee that L.D. 245 passed the State and Local Government Committee by a vote of 13-0.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

NEW BUSINESS

Legislative Interest Surveys

The Director indicated that the interest surveys sent to Legislators had been coming back slowly, but she realizes the Legislators have a lot on their plates at this time and they may need more time to give the survey due consideration.

The Committee requested that Director Ashcroft attend the Committee Chairs' meetings with the Speaker and the President as well as the Republican caucuses on April 12th, to remind the Committee Chairs and other members to take the opportunity to fill out and return their Legislator surveys. The Director related the survey results to date to the Committee, noting that only 10 surveys had been received to date.

Potential Evaluation Topics

In response to a question from Sen. Raye, Director Ashcroft indicated that OPEGA was ready to begin an evaluation at any time. The Director proceeded to lead the Committee in a brainstorming session about potential evaluation areas. A discussion ensued regarding the various topics. The potential areas of interest mentioned included:

- Vacant positions
- DHHS payments to providers
- DHHS Guardian Ad Litum
 - Confidentiality statute for children caught up in this program
 - Interaction between guardians & foster parents
- Child Development Services
 - Are kids getting services in the most effective way?
- BIS – charging other agencies
- Vehicle fleet management (MDOT, Public Safety, IF & W)
 - Personal use
 - Disposal
 - Fuel efficiency
 - Utilization
 - Management of assets
 - Purchase vs. lease
 - June transactions
 - Grade of vehicle appropriate to position?
- University System Central Office
- Mental Health services for children
 - Public funds supporting jobs in non-profit sector
 - Community service providers (is this the most effective?)
- Dirigo Health
 - Federal funds properly spent - \$53 million
 - Successful program

Sen. Mitchell mentioned that the Education Committee was already in the process of commissioning a study on Rural Transportation costs. The Committee agreed this study should be completed before assigning any OPEGA resources to this topic.

SCHEDULE NEXT COMMITTEE MEETING

The next Committee meeting is scheduled for Monday, April 25, 2005 at 4:00 pm in the Labor Committee Room.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 5:20 p.m.