

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

**Meeting Summary**  
**April 25, 2005**

**CALL TO ORDER**

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

**ROLL CALL**

Senators:                    Sen. Gagnon, Sen. Courtney, Sen. Raye  
Absent: Sen. Dow, Sen. Perry, Sen. Mitchell  
(Sen. Mitchell joined meeting in progress)

Representatives:        Rep. Dugay, Rep. Canavan, Rep. Collins, Rep. Crosthwaite,  
Rep. O'Brien, Rep. Trahan

Legislative Officers    Beth Ashcroft, Director, OPEGA  
and Staff:                Diana Stiles Friou, Principal Analyst, OPEGA  
Lorna Pelkey, Administrative Secretary, OPEGA

Director Ashcroft suggested dispensing with the agenda item "Roll Call" in the future, and the Committee agreed. Instead, the Administrative Secretary will note the attendance record for inclusion in the Summaries.

**SUMMARY OF April 11th MEETING**

The Committee requested a minor change in language related to the Mental Health Services for Children brainstorming item. The Administrative Secretary will make the change.

**REPORT FROM OPEGA DIRECTOR**

Director Ashcroft introduced Diana Stiles Friou, OPEGA's new Principal Analyst, to the Committee. She noted that Ms. Friou brings a background in program planning, monitoring and evaluation in health and human services and education areas, as well as analytical strengths to OPEGA.

The Director briefed the Committee on her recent trip to Washington, D.C. for a NLPES meeting, noting that it had been a worthwhile opportunity to build a network of peers and learn about OPEGA-type functions in other states.

The Director also reported that she had recently given presentations to the local chapter of the American Society of Public Administrators and a University of Maine at Augusta Public Program Evaluation class. The presentations consisted of an overview of OPEGA and the Government Oversight Committee and were well received.

Director Ashcroft also mentioned that she plans to hold an informational session for the heads of the various functions that may be the recipients of OPEGA evaluations, to educate them about the status of OPEGA's activities and what they can expect of OPEGA in the future. The Director is considering holding an OPEGA Open House in conjunction with the info session. The Committee agreed this would be a good idea.

## **OLD BUSINESS**

There was no old business.

## **UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

### Legislator Interest Surveys

The Director related that she has received 22 surveys back from individual legislators at this time and reviewed the summary of these survey results with the Committee. She also reported that she had received one Joint Standing Committee survey back from Appropriations indicating their interest in OPEGA reviewing the Economic Development Programs and staffing considerations mentioned in the Part I Budget.

Sen. Gagnon suggested contacting the analysts for the Joint Standing Committees to request that the surveys be added to their agenda in order to obtain the input from these Committees.

### Potential Evaluation Topics and Scope Areas

Director Ashcroft reviewed with the Committee the brainstorming list she developed from last meeting's discussions and the scoping statements she had developed on the Fleet Management and Guardian Ad Litem topics. She also pointed out that some new topics had been suggested by Sen. Raye and Rep. Dugay. The Committee had discussions about the various topics and then proceeded to vote on what to do with these topics.

**Motion:** That OPEGA be directed to develop a scoping statement on the issue of late payments to providers leaving the scoping perspective to Director Ashcroft. (Motion by Sen. Mitchell, second by Rep. Canavan, unanimous.)

**Discussion:** There was discussion between the Director and Committee members attempting to clarify what an appropriate scope might be. In the end, areas of interest evolved into two different but related topics:

1. What is being done to address the new system problems that are causing late payments to providers, and
2. How well are new systems planned and implemented?

**Motion:** That an amendment be made to the current motion to request that OPEGA be directed to develop scoping statements on the two separate topics identified in the discussion. (Moved, seconded, unanimous.)

After a lengthy discussion related to effective protection of the children in the Guardian Ad Litem program:

**Motion:** That the Guardian Ad Litem topic scoped by OPEGA be moved to the On-Deck list. (Motion by Sen. Gagnon, second by Rep. Trahan, unanimous.)

**Motion:** That OPEGA be directed to develop a scoping statement on vacant positions as suggested by the Appropriations and Financial Affairs Committee. (Motion by Sen. Mitchell, second by Sen. Raye, unanimous.)

**Motion:** That the Fleet Management topic scoped by OPEGA be moved to the On-Deck list. (Motion by Rep. Trahan, second by Rep. Collins, unanimous.)

**Motion:** That OPEGA be directed to develop a scoping statement on Economic Development Programs as suggested by the Appropriations and Financial Affairs Committee and described in the Part I Budget. (Motion by Sen. Mitchell, second by Sen. Gagnon, passed 8-1.)

**Motion:** That the food stamp topic be tabled for further discussion and consideration at a future meeting. (Motion by Sen. Raye, second by Rep. O'Brien, unanimous.)

**Motion:** That the Mainecare/Medicaid topic be tabled for further discussion and consideration at a future meeting. (Motion by Rep. Canavan, seconded, unanimous.)

A discussion followed regarding the Spurwink Schools topic. Rep. Dugay suggested the whole program be looked at, not just the schools.

**Motion:** That OPEGA be directed to develop a scoping statement on the Spurwink program. (Motion by Sen. Mitchell, second by Rep. Dugay, unanimous.)

Sen. Mitchell mentioned that Child Development Services is under a focused study at this time. She suggested withdrawing that item for the time being, but keeping the subject in mind for future evaluation. The Committee agreed.

**Motion:** That OPEGA be directed to develop a scoping statement on the Central Office of the University of Maine system. (Motion by Rep. Trahan, seconded.)

**Discussion:** Sen. Gagnon stated he was concerned the Committee was targeting the Central Office when he feels a review of administration and administrative support for the entire system should be looked at.

**Motion:** That an amendment be made to direct OPEGA to develop a scoping statement on the entire administration and administrative support services for the University of Maine system rather than focus on the Central Office. (Motion by Rep. Trahan, second by Sen. Mitchell, unanimous.)

A discussion was held regarding mental health services for children.

**Motion:** That OPEGA be directed to develop a scoping statement on the effective delivery of mental health services for children. (Motion by Sen. Mitchell, seconded, unanimous.)

Regarding the topic of Dirigo Health, Rep. Trahan indicated he felt that the program has not been in existence long enough and is politically charged. He suggested not evaluating it at this time. Sen. Gagnon concurred. The Committee agreed.

## **NEW BUSINESS**

### **SCHEDULE NEXT COMMITTEE MEETING**

The next Committee meeting is scheduled for Monday, May 2, 2005 at 4:00 pm in the Labor Committee Room.

### **ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting was adjourned at 5:25 p.m.