

LEGISLATIVE AUDIT ADVISORY COUNCIL
Minutes of Meeting
December 14, 2017
Senate Committee Room A-B
State Capitol Building

The items listed on the Agenda are incorporated and considered to be part of the minutes herein.

Senator Mike Walsworth called the meeting to order at 2:50 p.m. Ms. Liz Martin called the roll confirming quorum was present.

Members Present: Senator Mike Walsworth, Chairman
Representative Julie Stokes, Vice Chairman
Senator W. Jay Luneau
Representative Jimmy Harris
Representative Blake Miguez
Representative Clay Schexnayder

Members Absent: Senator Danny Martiny
Senator John Smith
Senator Wesley Bishop
Representative Marcus Hunter

Also Present: Daryl G. Purpera, Louisiana Legislative Auditor (LLA)

Approval of Minutes

Representative Schexnayder made a motion to approve the minutes for the November 16, 2017, meeting and with no objection, the motion was approved.

Extension Requests

Mr. Bradley Cryer, Director of Local Government Audit Services, presented two lists of entities requesting more time to complete and submit their financial audits to the LLA. The Emergency Extension Requests 90 Days or Less list included the Town of St. Joseph and the City of Central School Board. Senator Luneau moved to approve the emergency extensions and with no objection, the motion was approved.

The Nonemergency Extension Requests for 90 days or less included 12 entities and Mr. Cryer provided explained the reasons for their requests. Senator Walsworth recommended changing the Union Parish School Board's extension to February 28, 2018, because they already had two prior audits not timely submitted in the past five years. Senator Luneau moved to approve to approve nonemergency extension requests with the one revision. With no objection, the motion was approved.

Department of Public Safety and Corrections – Public Safety Services – Office of State Police (LSP) Investigative Audit Issued December 14, 2017

Mr. Roger Harris, Investigative Audit Director, introduced Amy Dees, the primary investigative auditor for this report. Ms. Dees explained that LSP has no centralized system. She had to search three databases to get the travel records for the officers.

Representative Miguez asked if this report would be discussed at a later meeting, and Chairman Walsworth explained that this report would be covered in this meeting but when Colonel Mike Edmonson provides his response it would be added to the report.

Mr. Harris explained the process is to allow two weeks for a response to the draft audit and in the exit conference they are aware of the findings. His auditors strive to be right the first time but that is the reason for responses to refute any findings and be allowed to explain themselves. Two copies of this report were provided – one to Colonel Edmonson and one to Colonel Kevin Reeves, LSP Superintendent. The report that was leaked included the letter to Colonel Edmonson, so that indicates that his report somehow was leaked. No one at the LLA provided a copy to anyone else. Since that initial report, some language about the training academy was modified and they fine-tuned some numbers, but no major changes were made.

Representative Miguez asked if Colonel Edmonson knew about the trip that the officers took to Las Vegas with sightseeing on the way. Ms. Dees said the officers who were on the trip felt that they had Colonel Edmonson's approval and the report shows screen shots of text messages to and from Colonel Edmonson. Discussion continued regarding LSP's approval process for the travel and the text messages indicating that Colonel Edmonson was aware of the troopers route to the conference.

Mr. Gregory Clapinski, Investigative Audit Manager, presented the audit's findings regarding improper use of hotel rooms during Mardi Gras and the City of New Orleans paid for the hotel rooms. Further discussion continued about the issue of Colonel Edmonson's family and friends using the hotel rooms, as well as the other findings in the investigative audit.

Colonel Kevin Reeves made an opening statement showing appreciation for the audit team and welcoming their recommendations. He explained that LSP implemented policies and processes to address the findings and those will be followed regardless of the officers' rank. Some officers had been disciplined and counseled in response to the audit. Colonel Reeves said that better days are ahead because of strong core values and the officers do not want to let down the public or retirees. They are not perfect and make mistakes but it is critical to listen and learn so they can move forward and serve the people.

Senator Walsworth commended Colonel Reeves and cautioned him to follow the policies and glad to see that 2018 will be a new beginning. Senator Luneau said he was glad that Colonel Reeves accepted the responsibilities and addressing the policy issues. He said policies about housing are important for not just this agency because probably happening at other agencies. Representative Miguez said that the state's trust is important for LSP and glad that Colonel Reeves is bringing that back. He just wants to see troopers and retirees treated equally and fairly. Colonel Reeves said that all state troopers where a badge and deserve respect equally.

Lieutenant Colonel Mike Noel shared changes to the disciplinary review and promotion processes. Representative Miguez commented that the culture at LSP must change and the in-crowd system needs to be gone so the troopers feel safe. Colonel Reeves said he hopes officers will come forth when they see policies being violated. He explained that LSP will have a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the City of New Orleans to better track troopers in the hotel rooms when working for Mardi Gras, etc.

Representative Miguez questioned Colonel Reeves about his housing. Colonel Reeves said that he stays in LSP housing while in Baton Rouge working and goes home when not working. He was directed by the governor to use the LSP housing when in town. Further discussion about meals, dry cleaning, internal controls and policies continued.

Local Government Updates

This agenda item was not discussed and Senator Walsworth said it would be moved to a later meeting.

Other Business

No other business was discussed.

Adjournment

Representative Stokes offered the motion to adjourn and with no objection, the meeting adjourned at 4:40 p.m.

Approved by LAAC on: April 3, 2018

The video recording of this meeting is available in Senate Broadcast Archives:
http://senate.la.gov/video/videoarchive.asp?v=senate/2017/12/121417LAAC_0