

# Inside the Legislative Process Meeting Minutes

Zoom Video Conference Call  
April 30, 2020

## **Call to Order**

The meeting of the Inside the Legislative Process committee was called to order by the Chair, Buddy Johnson (Ark.), at 3:05 pm Central on April 30, 2020.

## **Attendance**

The following members of the committee were present: Buddy Johnson (Ark.), chair; Tim Sekerak (Ore.), vice chair; Robert Haney (Texas), vice chair; Brad Hendrickson (Wash.), Brian Takeshita (Hawaii), Ali Sagraves (Ohio), Maryann Horch (Va.), Joyce Wright (Ala.), Bill MaGill (Vt.) and Lindsey Vroegindewey (Mont.).

Other members/guests in attendance included Brian McKinley (Ore.), and Angela Andrews (NCSL).

## **Approval of Minutes**

The minutes of the last meeting of the Inside the Legislative Process Committee in Seattle on September 26<sup>th</sup>, 2019 were unanimously approved on motion of Brad Hendrickson, seconded by Robert Haney.

## **Order of Business**

The Chair recognized Brad Hendrickson to give a report from the Technology Committee. Mr. Hendrickson reported that the committee would be seeking approval from the ASLCS Executive Committee to seek technical help from the National Association of Legislative Information Technology (NALIT) in a joint effort to revamp usage and data for the Inside the Legislative Process website. Once the Technology Committee receives appropriate approvals, a subcommittee will be formed to contact and discuss the issues with NALIT around the September 30, 2020 time period.

Mr. Hendrickson further explained that a discussion with Tim Storey, Executive Director of the NCSL, revealed a preference by NCSL to utilize their in-house technology department and resources to address any revamp of the database and website instead of inviting NALIT to participate.

And finally, Mr. Hendrickson offered that a solution could also be found in using the Washington Senate's technology staff to explore the creation of technology solutions for this website and database. The information stored within this application has historically been quite varied to be captured in a traditional database structure, so other custom solutions are being discussed. The technology staff in Washington State is recommending to develop a test database to evaluate solutions.

Tim Sekerak then inquired of Angela Andrews about the monetary cost associated with operating the current database. Ms. Andrews said that she would check on those numbers,

but knew there was a \$5000.00 annual software license. Mr. Sekerak asked if a newly designed in-house product by the Washington Legislature would still maintain an annual \$5000.00 license cost? Maryann Horch then further inquired about the NCSL technology E-learning grant that was used in the past for advances in technology for ASLCS. Brad Hendrickson stated that he would explore these questions with his technology staff.

The Chair called for a motion of the committee to authorize Brad Hendrickson to engage the various technology entities to explore solutions for an update of this database and website. Ali Sagraves offered the motion, seconded by Robert Haney. The vote revealed unanimous approval of the committee present and the motion was adopted.

The Chair offered that the Inside the Legislative Process Committee will continue to work with the Technology subcommittee on the issue.

The Chair then recognized Angela Andrews to explain her thoughts on what should happen to the current data and processes. Ms. Andrews asked the committee, “What do we do with the current strategy of gathering information by survey? And furthermore, should a different information gathering process be used by ASLCS members?” The general consensus of the committee was to think further about the future of this process. The Chair inquired of the committee if the application will continue to reside in its current website tool form as well. Mr. Hendrickson mentioned the ASLCS Listserv and the current drawbacks of using that process by Society members. Mr. Hendrickson stated that it can be burdensome to receive many emails from members of states that answer these inquiries “Not in (my state).” Mr. Hendrickson expressed hope that a new product might just create summaries of only states that had some information to offer instead of those who were just answering “no.” Mr. Sekerak mentioned that he offered at the Seattle PDS that maybe a solution could be created that states could answer questions dynamically to mitigate negative outcomes of the current Listserv process. Mr. Hendrickson agreed and supported the validity of the argument.

The Chair further offered that maybe the application could take the form more similar to a Wikipedia page. Ali Sagraves offered that it should require credentials of ASLCS members before entry of data. Mr. Hendrickson offered support and felt that value could be found as long as validation of the user occurs similar in nature to the Survey Monkey application in format and function. Ms. Andrews closed with a suggestion that the committee organize several recommendations for the ASLCS Executive Committee, and remarks that it is really a policy discussion about how members receive responses and may be out of the defined committee jurisdiction. The Chair agreed to mention the issue to the Executive Committee at the next day’s Zoom meeting.

Mr. Sekerak offered that his opinion was that the Listserv data is very important and should continue to be captured for members. The Chair offered that during his most recent legislative session the data produced by the Listserv concerning the most recent COVID-19 pandemic and processes being used throughout the country was very helpful for Arkansas. Ms. Andrews also offered that a drawback of the Listserv is that a number of chambers do not participate and often the results are difficult to determine for overall

data purposes or answers. Mr. Hendrickson stated that maybe different forms and bifurcations of the Listserv for individual users may be a better solution.

Mr. Sekerak posed the question: What is the value add for the database and surveys? Is it still useful for NCSL to produce summaries of the data or should the Inside the Legislative Process committee produce the summary of the overall data results? Ms. Andrews stated that this publication of data has been the role traditionally of NCSL staff. Ms. Andrews also stated that members of ASLCS seem to want to continue to have summaries of the data, but she is comfortable with whatever the Society wants to do in this process. Ms. Andrews stated that NCSL is eager to move forward on the project and continue to collaborate. Robert Haney offered that the Listserv and the Inside the Legislative Process data from surveys have competing uses and importance to users. The Listserv provides data on solutions to unique problems being encountered and the surveys compile primarily data to gauge majority usage of processes. Brian Takeshita commented that the immediate results for the Listserv responses produced great value in his opinion.

### **Adjournment**

With no further discussion, the Chair requested a motion to adjourn the meeting of the Inside the Legislative Process Committee. Brad Hendrickson made the motion to adjourn, and Maryann Horch seconded the motion. The motion to adjourn unanimously prevails.

Respectfully submitted,

Robert Haney, Texas  
Vice-Chair