

ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE
SELECT COMMITTEE ON LEGISLATIVE ETHICS
SEPTEMBER 23, 2025
12:00 PM

FULL COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES

[12:06:00 PM](#)

Note: The meeting began at 12:06 PM. The meeting was not called to order by the chair and roll call was not taken.

Members in attendance:

Skip Cook
Deb Fancher
Conner Thomas
Joyce Anderson
Carl Symons White
Senator Gary Stevens
Senator Robert Yundt
Representative Alyse Galvin
Representative Kevin McCabe

Others present:

Administrator Kevin Reeve
Jacqueline Yeagle
Jamie Benton

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1. INTRODUCTION OF NEW STAFF

Administrator Kevin Reeve introduced Jamie Benton to the committee. Ms. Benton was hired with funds allocated from Legislative Council, \$70,000, for a temporary position to help bring the Ethics office up to date. Since the passing of Jerry Anderson, former administrator, in 2023 and the lengthy hiring process of a new administrator, the office has been in a catch-up mode.

Chair Anderson welcomed Jamie Benton. Jamie Benton introduced herself to the committee.

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Representative Alyse Galvin, Senator Gary Stevens, Skip Cook, Carl White, Conner Thomas, Deb Fancher, Senator Robert Yundt, and Representative Kevin McCabe introduced themselves and welcomed Jamie Benton to the Ethics Office.

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2. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Chair Anderson entertained a motion to approve the agenda. Deb Fancher so moved.

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3. PUBLIC COMMENT

Chair Anderson entertained public comment. There was no public comment.

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- 4.** Chair Anderson entertained a **motion to go into EXECUTIVE SESSION** *to discuss matters which by law must remain confidential under AS 24.60.160, Uniform Rule 22(b) regarding executive sessions, and Rules of Procedure Section 5: Executive Sessions and discussion of matters, the immediate knowledge of which would adversely affect the finances of a governmental unit, and discussion of subjects that tend to prejudice the reputation and character of a person.*

Representative Kevin McCabe so moved.

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5. EXECUTIVE SESSION

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6. PUBLIC SESSION

Chair Anderson returned the committee to public session.

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7. STATE BENEFIT AND LOAN PROGRAM ANNUAL REVIEW

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Chair Anderson explained AS 24.60.050 of the Ethics Act requires the committee to annually review the state benefit and loan programs requiring disclosure and to annually publish an updated list of those programs. State benefit and loan programs are those programs that are awarded on a discretionary basis. Everyone subject to the Ethics Act must report participation in those programs. Every year, the Ethics Office contacts all state departments with a current list of state benefit and loan programs requiring disclosure. The departments are asked to review the list and reply back to the committee whether the list is accurate or if changes to the list are required.

a. Dept of Commerce, Community, and Economic Development - Division of Investments

Chair Anderson reported the Department of Commerce, Community, and Economic Development had changed the name of the division that housed their listed programs to the Division of Investments. The change request was notification of the division name change only. No action was required by the committee.

b. Department of Environmental Conservation

Chair Anderson outlined that the Department of Environmental Conservation Division of Spill Prevention and Response requested adding a new program to list because the program is not generally available to members of the public. There were no questions or comments. The program, Firefighting Substances Disposal Reimbursement Program, will be added to the list.

c. Department of Natural Resources - Division of Oil and Gas

Administrator Kevin Reeve reported the program, Oil Sale Exploration Incentive Credits, no longer exists and removal had been requested in 2022 and approved by the committee. Mistakenly, the program remained on the list. A copy of the committee minutes detailing the removal from the list was included in the packet. The program will be removed from the list. No further action was required by the committee.

Representative Alyse Galvin recommended the Ethics Office annually remind legislators and legislative employees of the need to file state benefit and loan program disclosures.

d. Department of Transportation

Chair Anderson noted the Department of Transportation requested removal of all their programs from the list. They had not, however, completed an individual review form for each of the programs.

Administrator Kevin Reeve called Dom Pannone, of the Department of Transportation, and put him on speaker. Dom Pannone said the department did not believe the programs were state benefit programs. The programs are regulated, transactional in nature, and have federal regulations and guidelines, or other statutory guidelines.

Chair Anderson asked if any of the programs were awarded on a discretionary basis or if they use fixed criteria.

Dom Pannone replied there is fixed criteria for all of the programs, either in regulation [Alaska] Title 17 AAC 10, in statute, or by federal regulation.

Chair Anderson requested the department complete the review form for each of the programs, making sure to include an explanation about why it should be removed from the list. Dom Pannone agreed to return those forms within a week for committee further review.

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8. SEALASKA INTERNSHIP REQUEST

Chair Anderson presented background on internship programs. The Ethics Committee processes internship programs other than those with the University of Alaska during a legislative session. The Ethics Committee approves non-UA internship programs and those that start during the interim. The application is reviewed by the administrator to ensure adherence to specific criteria, and the administrator then has discretion to approve the program and notify the committee about the approval.

Chair Anderson invited Administrator Kevin Reeve to speak to the Sealaska Corporation internship request. He reported the request is for an ongoing internship relationship during the legislative session and questioned whether it requires Ethics Committee or Legislative Council approval.

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Chair Anderson noted the similarities between the Sealaska request and the ongoing internship program with First Alaskans. She recommended Sealaska Corporation come to a future meeting to speak to the committee about the particulars of the program they propose.

Skip Cook offered that the follow up with Sealaska could be outside of a meeting.

Representative Alyse Galvin asked if other already approved internship programs were ongoing and if not, perhaps checking in with Legislative Council was advisable.

Chair Anderson replied that the committee had approved other ongoing programs, for example, REACH.

Representative Alyse Galvin asked if committee approval was a blanket approval, allowing an organization to place an intern at any time in the future.

Chair Anderson replied that an organization would still need to submit a placement request for future interns.

Representative Alyse Galvin wondered if there were political organizations that legislators might be uncomfortable with. She wondered if legislators may want to have a part in the internship approval process.

Chair Anderson responded that under AS 24.60.080(h), a legislator may accept the services of a legislative intern who is participating in an educational program *approved by the committee* if the services are used for legislative purposes.

Representative Kevin McCabe stated he was comfortable with approving the Sealaska Corporation request.

Administrator Kevin Reeve asked what further information was needed to make a determination.

Chair Anderson recommended to Kevin Reeve that a review of the supporting documentation from the First Alaskans internship program request would identify the information needed.

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9. GRADUATION CERTIFICATE UPDATE

Administrator Kevin Reeve reported that the print shop had printed and distributed over 15,000 graduation certificates and letters in 2025. He directed the committee to the examples in packets of the types of communications distributed. He noted the letters are addressed to graduates as well as to parents of younger students. The letters appear to be a means of getting their names out in the public.

Administrator Kevin Reeve reminded the committee that at the May 30, 2025, committee meeting, the committee had decided to seek an advisory opinion about the practice of mailing graduation communications. He reported that Legislative Legal is always ready to provide a legal opinion. He asked the committee for guidance and suggested the committee may want to explore the purpose of the communications, whether they have a legislative purpose, whether the use of state funds is warranted, and if so, which state funds are acceptable to use.

Deb Fancher noted she thinks it stupendous that legislators send graduation letters to graduating high school students. However, she wonders how beneficial it is to send letters to the parents of elementary students.

Representative Kevin McCabe posited the office allowance account was the proper funding source for the letters.

Senator Gary Stevens said he had sent letters his first couple of years in office and then stopped because he did not see an overall benefit to anyone.

Representative Alyse Galvin suggested the committee give basic guidance about sending the letters to graduating seniors only. She also thinks sending a letter from the legislature rather than individual legislators may be something to consider. She reported she sends birthday cards that she signs personally and pays for out of her office account. She occasionally received communications from her constituents that show the birthday cards have value to some of the recipients.

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Chair Anderson entertained committee discussion about whether graduation letters are a good use of state resources.

Administrator Kevin Reeve reminded the committee the genesis of the issue was the question about sending letters to students in online schools, some of whom may not reside in a legislator's district.

Senator Gary Stevens reported he would hesitate to engage in that particular practice but was reluctant to take the opportunity away from people who think it is important.

Chair Anderson noted graduation certificates are specifically listed in the list of approved office allowance account expenses.

Representative Alyse Galvin replied that in more general terms it says, "engagement with constituents." She said she always adds a statement encouraging recipients to contact her if they need help navigating state services and provides information about how to vote.

Chair Anderson said there were two issues: use of state money and sending letters to online school students of who may be out of district.

Conner Thomas noted the question is whether there is a legislative purpose.

Administrator Kevin Reeve noted there is an advisory opinion saying that mailing outside a legislative district is not allowed. He asked if there was standard response to questions about the topic, and if so, what is that response and what is the best way to disseminate the information?

Chair Anderson wondered if the print shop prints the letters, does the cost of printing come from the office allowance account.

Representative Alyse Galvin replied that was not the case.

Deb Fancher replied she still thinks there is value in congratulating high school and college graduating students, but sees less value in sending letters to parents of second grade students.

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Representative Alyse Galvin said she thinks there is value in legislators limiting mailings to their district.

Chair Anderson asked the committee what advice they have for Kevin Reeve when he receives inquiries about this issue.

Deb Fancher suggested limiting graduation letters to graduating seniors only.

Conner Thomas asked Deb Fancher if she thought sending a letter to a graduating high school student had a legislative purpose but sending a letter to the parent of a younger student did not.

Senator Gary Stevens said he was still reluctant to take the practice away from people who think it is important.

Administrator Kevin Reeve said he would craft a policy and he asserted no policy is better than its distribution of the information.

Deb Fancher said you can't create policy on everything.

Conner Thomas and Representative Kevin McCabe said that it matters where parents are registered to vote regardless of where the kid goes to school.

Representative Alyse Galvin said the house rules chair has been communicating to house members on the appropriate use of the print shop.

Joyce Anderson said she favored the committee advising legislators to limit mailings to parents and kids in their own districts. She asked if the committee agreed with her assessment. The committee agreed to Chair Anderson's proposal.

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10. STAFF REPORT

a. Budget

i. FY 2025 final report

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Administrator Kevin Reeve reported a surplus of \$ 63,437.79 due to a vacancy in the administrator position and an overspend on the commodities category to cover the costs of printer cartridges. There was a small surplus in travel because no travel claim was submitted for Jerry McBeath's travel expenses in November [2024] after he died.

Joyce Anderson explained the surplus in the services budget was due to unused outside counsel funds.

ii. FY 2026 authorization/status

Administrator Kevin Reeve noted the only change in the FY 2026 budget was a \$32,000 expected increase in salaries and a one-year legislative council authorization of \$70,000 to fund a temporary position.

b. Informal Advice

Administrator Kevin Reeve referred to the note at the top of the first page of the staff report outlining concern that callers increasingly do not want to provide details about the situation prompting the inquiry, and the statement explaining how the office is responding to those questions.

Chair Anderson entertained questions about the informal advice. Hearing no questions from the committee, she proceeded to ask Kevin Reeve what is the legislative concern regarding the demonstration flight referenced in the third question under the Gifts heading.

Administrator Kevin Reeve reported the disclosures explain the legislative concern is to spend the day with tourists experiencing Alaska. The Ethics Office has accepted that as a legislative concern. The flight in question was a demonstration flight for a particular type of aircraft. The inquiry was for help determining a gift value. Ultimately, they did not file a disclosure because the gift value was less than \$250.

Representative Alyse Galvin offered that the value in the type of gift travel under discussion is learning from experts the relevance of those industries to Alaska and to the economy. She thinks what is important is that disclosures are filed and would hesitate to make it more difficult to file.

Administrator Kevin Reeve agreed with Representative Alyse Galvin. To date, the Ethics Office has generally taken on face value the legislative purpose.

c. Status of Reinbold Alaska Supreme Court Case

There was no discussion.

d. COGEL conference update

Administrator Kevin Reeve reported problems with lodging arrangements at the conference. He thanked the public members for their tolerance while the issue is resolved.

e. Staffing Update Workload

Administrator Kevin Reeve reported Jamie Benton has been extremely helpful in organizing the office. She is developing a draft travel policy as well as taking on other tasks.

12. SUBCOMMITTEE REPORTS

a. Ethics legislation

Administrator Kevin Reeve reported progress is moving forward.

Chair Anderson said she and Conner Thomas had suggested changes to the draft legislation. She will send those suggestions to the subcommittee for review and comment and schedule a meeting.

b. Rules of Procedure

Administrator Kevin Reeve reported Representative Kevin McCabe provided insightful comments to a recent draft. The subcommittee completed a review of the first 13 sections and plans to review the remaining sections which address complaints at a later time.

Chair Anderson added she had asked Kevin Reeve to make edits and send the revision out to the subcommittee for review.

c. Travel policy guidelines

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Administrator Kevin Reeve reported general topics that need addressing have been identified. Chair of the travel subcommittee, Deb Fancher, requested the Ethics Office research the travel policies of other committees with public members. Researching the question revealed there were none. Jamie Benton started writing a draft policy referencing the State of Alaska AAM 60 travel policy.

Deb Fancher remarked she planned to talk with colleagues at the COGEL conference about their travel policies.

13. OTHER BUSINESS

Administrator Kevin Reeve sought discussion about a future meeting day. He suggested a meeting between November 12-18. The committee found agreement on Tuesday, November 18, assuming nothing arises to change those plans.

Administrator Kevin Reeve proposed sending electronic copies of the meeting agenda and documents rather than sending the pre-meeting packets through the mail. Paper copies will be available at the meeting and provisions will be made if any of the members prefers a mailed copy.

14. ADJOURN

Chair Anderson entertained a motion to adjourn. Representative Kevin McCabe so moved. The meeting adjourned at 2:09 PM.

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